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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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CONTRIBUTORS

MR. C. J. DISMUKES is professor emeritus at North Georgia College, Dahlonega, Georgia.

LT. GEN. ROBERT R. FAIRBURN is commanding general, Marine Corps Supply Activity, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

MR. JOHN B. MYERS is a member of the history faculty at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

MR. J. BARTON STARR is a member of the history faculty at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

DR. WILLIAM N. STILL, JR., is a member of the history faculty at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.

REACTION AND ADJUSTMENT: THE STRUGGLE
OF ALABAMA FREEDMEN IN POST-BELLUM
ALABAMA, 1865-1867

By
John B. Myers

Active fighting begun between the Union and the Confederate armies had virtually ended in Alabama by April, 1865. Subsequently on May 4, 1865, the Confederate forces east of the Mississippi River commanded by General Richard Taylor officially surrendered at Citronelle, Alabama. At the same time approximately 439,000 former slaves became free.¹ Prior to this event some Negroes were freed in areas of Alabama occupied by Union troops, but for all practical purposes, emancipation came with Taylor's surrender.

At the war's end Alabama was in a chaotic state politically, economically, and socially. Her economic as well as human resources were seriously depleted. As a result of the war, an estimated 40,000 white Alabamians lost their lives. The fires of war ravaged homes and fields. Wide areas of northern Alabama had been laid waste by contending armies and guerilla bands. Most railroads were not in working order and bridges had been burned. Railroad companies were impoverished with liquidation impending.²

Montgomery, the capital city of Alabama and the original capital of the Confederacy, was occupied by Union forces. Not only the Confederate State's government but also state and local authority ceased to function in most sections of Alabama. Military forces exercised effective authority only in the immediate areas in which they were stationed.³

¹Elizabeth Bethel, "Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama," *Journal of Southern History*, XIV (February, 1948), 49; *Harper's Monthly*, XXXI (May, 1865), 259.

²John L. Hunnicut, *Reconstruction in West Alabama; The Memoirs of John L. Hunnicut*, ed. William S. Hoole (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1959), 16; Bethel, "Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama," 58; U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 70, 291.

³Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878* (New York, 1927), 2-3; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Tour of Southern States, 1865-1866* (London, 1866), 211-212, 374, hereafter cited as *After the War: A Tour*.

During May and most of June, 1865, Alabama had no legally constituted government. The period of time which elapsed between the date of surrender and the establishment of a provisional government amounted to nearly fifty days. It was not until June 21, 1865, that President Andrew Johnson appointed Lewis E. Parsons provisional governor for Alabama. According to the President's program, Alabama was to draft a new constitution and cooperate closely with the Freedmen's Bureau and military commanders.⁴ It was under these conditions that Alabama Negroes were freed.

The Alabama's slaves' initial reaction to emancipation was varied. They usually received news of their freedom from invading Federal occupational troops or from masters. Such news was frequently followed by an atmosphere of great excitement and jubilee. Reports circulated throughout the state of freedmen being in a great commotion following their liberation⁵ Many wanted to enjoy a long holiday and rejected the idea of work which seemed incompatible with their interpretation of freedom. Generally the former slaves appeared to lack confidence in their former masters and viewed their own former status as slaves with bitterness and revulsion.⁶ Under the slave institution implicit obedience was required, but to freedmen, obedience, like work did not seem consistent with freedom.⁷

Although some freedmen refused to labor, others, who were loyal to their masters, remained at work. Some were encouraged to stay by the rumor that property of their former masters would be divided at the end of the year among those who had worked the land as slaves. Other blacks, convinced that they would not be free as long as they remained on the plantations,

⁴Hunnicut, *Reconstruction in West Alabama*, 16; John Witherspoon DuBose, *Alabama's Tragic Decade: Ten Years of Alabama, 1865-1875*, ed. James K. Greer (Birmingham, Alabama, 1940), 3.

⁵W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, Lewis E. Parsons Personal Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as Parsons Personal Papers.

⁶William Fiske to George Whipple, March 14, 1866, American Missionary Association Archives, Fisk University Library, Nashville, Tennessee; W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, Parsons Personal Papers.

⁷*Harper's Weekly*, X (February 10, 1866), 83; Charles Stearns, *The Black Man of the South and the Rebels* (New York, 1872), 328.

flocked to towns, army depots, or to refugee camps.⁸ Still others traveled about the state seeking members of their family separated by slavery.

The freedmen spent a great deal of their time on the move. In Clarke County, Alabama, the freedmen were reportedly in motion. "Marches and counter-marches were observed in various directions." A constant stream of freedmen of all ages and conditions were seen passing through Selma, Alabama, supposedly enroute to Mississippi or Tennessee. A Eufaula, Alabama, correspondent cited a great influx of Negroes from the countryside to the towns.⁹ Most of their traveling was done on foot. Alabama's transportation facilities were disrupted. The railroad accommodations which did exist were segregated and those designated for blacks were generally inadequate. Freight cars and open platforms were the most common facilities even though they were charged first class fares. On a train traveling from Opelika, Alabama, to Montgomery, Negroes were packed in a boxcar and huddled around a box stove to keep warm. Freedmen occasionally objected only to be admonished by whites. "You're free ain't you? Good as white folks? Then pay the same fare and keep your mouth shut."¹⁰

The movement of freed blacks to the larger towns was shown by the population increase in the counties of Mobile, Montgomery, and Dallas with a proportionate decrease in other counties. The Alabama census for 1866 revealed a marked shift

⁸Montgomery *Daily Advertiser*, September 9, 1865; Horace Mann Bond, "Social and Economic Forces in Alabama Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIII (July, 1938), 296; Edward Chambers Betts, *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, 1804-1870* (Montgomery, Alabama, 1916), 105; U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 43, 9.

⁹Grove Hill *Clarke County Journal*, October 19, 1865; U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 43, 9; Montgomery *Daily Advertiser*, October 15, 1865; U. S. Department of War, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and the Confederate Armies*, I Series, XLIX, Part II (Washington, D. C., 1897), 940, hereafter cited as *Official Records*.

¹⁰Reid, *After the War: A Tour*, 385-386; Nevins, *Emergence of Modern America*, 4; John Richard Dennett, *The South As It Is*, ed. H. M. Christman (New York, 1965), 293.

by the freedmen from rural to urban areas from 1860 to 1866.¹¹ Since slavery restricted most blacks to the plantation, the freedmen hoped the towns might afford better opportunities to them.

Sudden emancipation under any circumstances would have been attended by extreme hardship and suffering. The liberation of Alabama slaves in the post-war period, an era characterized by depression and scarcity, increased the freedmen's hardships considerably. Clothing was scarce. Blacks frequently possessed only the clothes they wore and had a slim chance to procure more. Negro housing in towns as well as rural areas was extremely poor. A village of huts was erected near the ruins of an armory in Selma. During cold weather freedmen huddled around a fire which stood in the middle of the shacks. A number of Montgomery Negroes lived on the old fair grounds in shelters erected out of pine poles. The settlement was appropriately named "Hard Times."¹² Those who did not construct homes frequently had to pay exorbitant rent. A poorly constructed barn with no fireplace cost twenty dollars per month. Some were not fortunate enough to find even poor living quarters and succumbed to the harsh weather. During the winter of 1865 a Montgomery newspaper reported frequent incidents of Negroes freezing to death in back streets.¹³

Not only were Negro dwellings inadequate but the sanitary conditions were atrocious. Food seemed to be as scarce as good housing. Both blacks and whites were starving. A news correspondent in Mobile was appalled to learn that many blacks subsisted mainly on refuse "which in ordinary times would hardly be given to a dog." The predicted horrors expected during the

¹¹U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 70, 241; Theodore Branter Wilson, *The Black Codes of the South* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1965), 82; W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, Parsons Personal Papers. In Dallas County (Selma) the Negro population increased from 25,840 in 1860 to 29,601 in 1866, Mobile County 12,571 to 16,684, Montgomery County 23,780 to 30,762 for a total increase of 14,756.

¹²Reid, *After the War: A Tour*, 369; *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register*, July 21, 1865.

¹³Montgomery *Daily Mail*, January 11, 1866; Mrs. Dr. Wren to O. O. Howard, December 11, 1865, Oliver Otis Howard Papers, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, hereafter cited as Howard Papers.

winter of 1865 were described as "the very valley of the shadow of death." It was estimated that in Alabama alone 200,000 persons were in danger of extreme suffering and starvation during the 1865 winter.¹⁴ Under such circumstances it was no wonder that there were widespread reports of pilfering by blacks. Food was at a premium and a stray chicken, hog, or turkey was subject to seizure. Significantly blacks were not the only petty thieves. Whites also resorted to stealing to keep themselves alive.¹⁵

Inadequate housing, clothing, transportation, and food contributed to widespread outbreaks of disease. Tuberculosis, venereal disease, yellow fever, and smallpox were common among freedmen and frequently caused death or permanent damage. The lack of medical facilities resulted in disease reaching epidemic proportions. Entire communities were stricken with smallpox and other malignant diseases.¹⁶

During the hot summer months yellow fever raged in the Alabama coastal regions. Mobile reported a large number suffering from the disease during the summer of 1865.¹⁷ With the approach of winter came the outbreak of dreaded smallpox. Huntsville, Tuscumbia, Eufaula, Selma, Athens, Mobile, and Montgomery reported widespread occurrence of the disease during the winter of 1865-1866. Extreme measures were taken to control the spread of smallpox. In Eufaula, Alabama, the head of the family was to report any occurrence of the disease in his family or be fined \$50.00¹⁸ When a Negro woman died of smallpox in Limestone County, the owner of the dwelling threatened to burn the house if the Freedmen's Bureau did not remove the body. Freedmen were accused of bringing smallpox into the

¹⁴New York Times, June 12, 1865. U. S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session Part I, 94.

¹⁵*Harper's Weekly*, IX (December 16, 1865), 786; Henderson Donald, *The Negro Freedman* (New York, 1952), 179; Benjamin Averitt to L. E. Parsons, no date, 1865, Lewis E. Parsons' Official Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as Parsons Official Papers.

¹⁶Foster B. Zincke, *Last Winter in the U. S.* (London, 1868), 132, hereafter cited as *Last Winter*; Donald, *The Negro Freedman*, 180.

¹⁷Zincke, *Last Winter*, 158; *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register*, July 21, 1865.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, March 7, 1866.

towns from the countryside. A wagon-load of ailing Negroes was brought into Montgomery to be treated for smallpox much to the dismay of the town's inhabitants who demanded a quarantine. Such an event further solidified the belief that the disease was more common among blacks¹⁹ This accusation was probably true. The higher death rate from smallpox among freedmen could doubtlessly be attributed to the squalid conditions under which they lived. In a forty day period 400 Negroes died in a camp near Montgomery. Some whites believed that the high Negro mortality rate gave credence to their claims that the black population in the United States would soon die out.²⁰ Those whites stricken by smallpox were described as "careless in their habits and do not scruple to mix very intimately with their sable friends."²¹

Most areas handled smallpox in a similar manner. Those afflicted were isolated from the healthy inhabitants by being placed in a community pest house. In Montgomery, Athens, and Huntsville ambulances toured the streets conveying all suspicious cases to designated places.²²

Besides inadequate material necessities and poor health, the freedmen's difficulty in adjusting to freedom was complicated by the attitude of white Alabamians. Many of them did not accept emancipation gracefully. They could hardly conceive of black men as anything other than chattels. White Alabamians generally assumed that the Negro occupied a middle ground between the human and the animal. Some predicted eventual Negro extinction caused by the Negro's licentious nature and his reputed refusal to marry. Others attributed the possible decline to the Negroes' inability to take care of them-

¹⁹Huntsville *Daily Independent*, March 8, 1865; Joshua Burns Moore Diary, March 11, 1866, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama (Typed copy, original in possession of Earnestine Devours, Laurel, Mississippi); Grove Hill *Clarke County Journal*, January 18, 1866.

²⁰Chicago *Tribune*, September 2, 1865; Mobile *Daily Advertiser and Register*, July 21, 1865.

²¹Dr. T. R. Will to W. L. Coleman, December 6, 1865, Parsons Official Papers.

²²Huntsville *Daily Independent*, January 20, 1866; Athens *Post*, February 17, 1866; Dr. T. R. Hill to W. L. Coleman, December 6, 1865, Parsons Official Papers.

selves.²³ Many thought that the blacks, stripped of their protection under slavery, could not exist. More important it was believed that the absence of plantation discipline left white women unprotected from the degraded black male. Furthermore, there was a widespread fear that Negroes would seek revenge against whites.²⁴ Many white Alabamians professed that no two races considered so unequal as the Caucasian and the Negro could coexist upon any terms except as master and servant. They felt one must give way to the other and "it is not difficult to determine which one will do the giving."²⁵

The former slaveholding class was only slightly less hostile to emancipation than poor whites. They had gone to war to defend slavery and seemed unwilling to accept the death of the peculiar institution.²⁶ Though few men believed slavery could be restored, John W. Alvord, a Freedmen's Bureau agent, observed that public talk in Montgomery seemed to indicate a fixed purpose to oppose the freedmen's elevation. Benjamin C. Truman, appointed by the President to view conditions in the South, said that "when one believes that a race of beings is incapable of advancement he is prone to withhold the means of advancement. . . ."²⁷ In a few remote areas where Federal troops had not penetrated there were attempts to keep the Negroes as bondsmen. Outside Union Springs, Alabama, William C. Jordan, a former Confederate, was charged by military authorities for violation of his parole for refusing to emancipate his slaves.²⁸

²³Edward Hawthorne Moren to his wife, December 4, 1865, Edward Hawthorne Moren Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as Moren Papers.

²⁴Montgomery *Daily Mail*, May 16, 1865; U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 43, 8; Grove Hill *Clarke County Journal*, September 28, 1865.

²⁵Montgomery *Daily Ledger*, August 7, 1865; Mobile *Daily Advertiser and Register*, July 21, 1865.

²⁶Congressional *Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, Part I, 94; W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (Philadelphia, 1935), 138; John W. Alvord to O. O. Howard, December 3, 1865, Howard Papers.

²⁷U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 43, 9.

²⁸H. E. Sterkx, "William C. Jordan and Reconstruction in Bullock County, Alabama," *Alabama Review*, XV (January, 1962), 64; U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 70, 291.

Prejudices and bitterness directed toward the freedmen were not restricted to the white planter class. Though the poor whites reputedly had been injured by slavery, they were more concerned with separating themselves from blacks than they were in changing their status in southern society. They felt their individuality as a class could be continued by the barrier which had existed between themselves and the Negro slaves. Paul H. Buck claimed that poor whites hoped to maintain their position in society by making former slaves realize that the will of the white man would still prevail. To poor whites emancipation represented future social and economic dangers seemingly far greater than the continued superiority of the planter class. Blindly this group of whites sought to perpetuate a system which had virtually condemned them to a caste for 200 years.²⁹

Racism was only one reason for opposition to emancipation. The entire labor system had been upset. Former masters as a rule were skeptical of free Negro labor and viewed the future pessimistically. In 1865 Whitelaw Reid, a northern journalist traveling in Alabama, noticed that planters seemed to have no faith in Negro labor unless they "had the power to apply the lash."³⁰ Carl Schurz sensed a prevailing opinion among Alabama planters that the Negro would not work unless compelled by force.³¹ A Union soldier on a reconnaissance mission in southeastern Alabama found that the freedmen accepted and understood their position much sooner than former masters. He was told by a planter: "If we cannot whip the Negro, they and we cannot live in the same country."³²

The white attitude toward former slaves resulted in many abuses. The volatile atmosphere was intensified by Alabama

²⁹W. M. Brewer, "Poor Whites and Negroes in the South Since the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XV (January, 1930), 26; Paul H. Buck, "Poor Whites in the Ante-Bellum South," *American Historical Review*, XXXI (October, 1925), 54.

³⁰Walter L. Fleming, *The Sequel of Appomattox* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1921), 47; Reid, *After the War: A Tour*, 372.

³¹John T. Trowbridge, *The South: A Tour of Its Battlefields and Ruined Cities* (Hartford, Connecticut, 1867), 432; Carl Schurz, "Can the South Solve the Negro Problem?" *McClure's Magazine*, XXII (January, 1904), 260.

³²*Official Records*, I Series, XLIX, Part II, 1042.

being predominantly rural and characterized by frontier ruggedness and individualism. Such traits were further aroused by the lack of organized governmental restraint which frequently led to vigilante action.³³

Matters were complicated by the breakdown of civil law enforcement. General Charles R. Woods, commander of the Federal troops in the Department of Alabama, listed several counties which had neither civilian nor military authority. He said civil officials were either unable or unwilling to enforce the law. Woods claimed that "such conditions keep the rest of the community in fear of having their homes burned or losing their lives."³⁴ Even in areas where Union soldiers were garrisoned, the military was not always effective. Huntsville, Alabama, suffered robbery, murder, arson, and rapine at the hands of marauding bands. The streets of the town were crowded with the drunken and debauched. Thomas W. Conway, the Superintendent of Labor for the Department of the Gulf, called for provost marshals and troops in each county to secure order and provide proper police protection. He said that the freedmen had to be protected by the power of the Federal government or "thousands of blacks would be slain."³⁵ Carl Shurz reached the same conclusion. "When colored people are in the hands of bad ele-

³³T. B. Callis to W. Swayne, June 7, 1866, General Wager Swayne Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as Swayne Papers; Hunnicut, *Reconstruction in West Alabama*, 22.

³⁴Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, August 29, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida (Microfilm, original in the Library of Congress, Washington D. C.); James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902* (New York, 1903), VI, 323-324; U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 2, 66. On May 17, 1865, Alabama was designated as a part of the Department of the Gulf commanded by General E. R. S. Canby in New Orleans. On June 27, 1865, the Department of Alabama was created with headquarters at Mobile. This department was divided into 4 districts commanded by General Charles R. Woods.

³⁵Betts, *Early History of Huntsville*, 12; L. E. Parsons to Andrew Johnson, October 2, 1865, Governor Lewis E. Parsons Letterbook, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, hereafter cited as Parsons Letterbook; *Official Records*, I Series, XLIX, Part II, 954.

ments," Shurz wrote President Johnson, "such things inevitably lead to acts of violence an apprehension."³⁶

Military occupation seemed to agitate an already tense situation. Especially the presence of black soldiers aroused much disgust and apprehension. Some of the blacks who served as occupational troops had formerly been Alabama slaves. Former owners took their presence as a personal affront. In Mobile a citizen remarked, "There is my Tom. How I would like to cut the throat of that impudent good-for-nothing."³⁷

Alabama civil authorities attempted to cope with the lawlessness. In July, 1865, Governor Parsons directed several sheriffs to provide a sufficient number of well-armed deputies to preserve peace in their respective counties. In September, 1865, temporary volunteer military organizations were established on a county-wide basis. These organizations were authorized to assist the civil authorities only in case of emergency.³⁸

These local militias were organized more to control than protect the Negro. They patrolled the highways in the central part of the state. No freedman was permitted to travel without a pass signed by his master. Since many blacks left plantations after emancipation, large numbers without passes were apprehended. Captain W. A. Poillon, a Freedman's Bureau agent in Mobile, received reports of organized patrols with hounds guarding the highways. "The Negro does not know whether to leave the plantation and be harassed or remain on the plantation and be brutalized," Poillon lamented.³⁹ Reports persisted of the mili-

³⁶Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, September 5, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers.

³⁷John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War* (Chicago, 1961), 35; James E. Sefton, *The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1967), 50-51; Reid, *After the War: A Tour*, 213.

³⁸L. E. Parsons to Andrew Johnson, October 2, 1865, Parsons Letterbook; Adjutant Report to Robert M. Patton, no date, 1866, Robert M. Patton Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama; L. E. Parsons to J. C. Moorehead, November 11, 1865, Parsons Official Papers.

³⁹U. S. Congress, *House Reports*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 30, part III, 8; U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 70, 285; U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 2, 11.

tia robbing freedmen, shooting them on public thoroughfares for refusing to halt, and lodging them in jail for traveling without a pass.⁴⁰

Alabamians rationalized the militia's actions as being necessary to prevent a black uprising. Fear of insurrection was widespread among whites, but the fear was generally without foundation. Some applied the term insurrection in the loosest sense. Disrespect and insubordination among freedmen were considered synonymous with rebellion. Accusations of insubordination among blacks ranged from failure to doff their hats when approaching whites to refusal of beatings.⁴¹

Prior to the Christmas holidays in 1865, there was statewide apprehension of a Negro revolt. Idle freedmen who awaited the rumored grant of forty acres and a mule were indeed restless. As Christmas approached, blacks were reported arming themselves with all available weapons. In Eufaula, Alabama, freedmen supposedly held large quantities of arms and ammunition.⁴² Similar reports circulated from Russell and Shelby Counties. "The Negroes are becoming impudent, and unless something is done I fear the consequences," M.D. Sterrett warned Governor Parsons.⁴³

The insurrection never occurred, and the violence that did result was carried on by whites. Negro homes in Lowndes County were broken open, searched, and firearms along with other personal possessions were seized under the pretense of preventing an insurrection. Russell and Chambers counties described

⁴⁰*Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, part I, 94.

⁴¹Reid, *After the War: A Tour*, 386-387.

⁴²Bond, "Social and Economic Forces in Alabama Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIII (July, 1938), 296; Thomas Frederick Woodley, *Thaddeus Stevens* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1934), 485; see also Fawn M. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens, Scourge of the South* (New York, 1959); C. J. Pope to L. E. Parsons, December 11, 1865, Parsons Official Papers.

⁴³M. D. Sterrett to L. E. Parsons, December 11, 1865; C. J. Pope to L. E. Parsons, December 11, 1865; R. C. Toney to H. B. Cooper, September 23, 1865, Parsons Official Papers.

similar situations. Eufaula freedmen complained that their homes were ransacked and money taken. In several other instances Alabama civil authorities, backed by militia, searched freedmen's homes for weapons without the sanction of the occupants.⁴⁴

Such action by whites was partially understandable considering the muddled condition of Alabama authority, but most significant was that the whites' worst fears of insurrection were unfounded. Nevertheless, the homes of innocent freedmen had been pillaged purportedly because of their possession of weapons. Wager Swayne, assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, was aggravated by the intrusions upon the rights of Negroes. He reminded Alabamians that the Constitution of the United States espoused the right of the people to bear arms. Furthermore, all citizens were to be protected against unreasonable search and seizure. Swayne emphasized that Federal troops were in Alabama to protect all people.⁴⁵

Violence in Alabama became more the rule than the exception. Crimes of all types were committed in 1865. Men roved in large bands, day and night, taking the law into their own hands. Violence was not directed only against blacks. Many whites felt much more secure by spending their evenings in their homes "due to the prevalence of crime and robbery."⁴⁶ Nevertheless, abuse was aimed primarily at black people. Northern travelers gave some examples of such abuse. A horse obviously abandoned by a Union soldier was found by a freedman and was taken to the plantation. The master claimed the horse after recognizing its good quality. The Negro sought aid from the Freedmen's Bureau and returned to the plantation with an order verifying his claim. The perturbed master wielded a gun and threatened

⁴⁴U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 70, 292; M. D. Sterrett to L. E. Parsons, December 11, 1865, Parsons Official Papers; *Montgomery Daily Advertiser*, January 25, 1865.

⁴⁵Grove Hill *Clarke County Journal*, January 18, 1866; *New York Times*, March 26, 1866; *Montgomery Daily Advertiser*, January 25, 1866.

⁴⁶Grove Hill *Clarke County Journal*, September 7, 1865; Edward Hawthorne Moren to his wife, December 4, 1865, Moren Papers.

to kill the Negro if he was bothered again. When a train stopped in a station or a boat at a landing whites reportedly spent the delays tormenting blacks who wished to board.⁴⁷

Some whites carried their abuses of freedmen to atrocious extremes. Cases reported at the hospital in Montgomery indicated that many freedmen who deserted the plantations were savagely treated. Thomas W. Conway saw freedmen with slashed throats and without ears. A *New York Times* correspondent in Mobile said former planters relieved their frustrations of defeat and subjection by severing the ears, noses, and lips of former slaves. In one day five freedmen came into Montgomery with their ears severed. Others appeared with slit throats and marks left by beatings.⁴⁸

Some whites were not satisfied merely to abuse freedmen. Twelve cases in which Negroes had been killed by whites were reported to the provost marshal in Selma. In the same town a freedman was hanged by his thumbs and subjected to gross mistreatment for a week before he was beaten to death with a club. In Decatur a drunken ex-Confederate shot an innocent Negro through the head. The civil authorities refused to take action but warned him to stay out of sight for a day or two. A Montgomery Negro returning home surprised some white men robbing his wife. He was shot in the head.⁴⁹

Murders of freedmen were most frequent in the former large slaveholding areas. A Negro plantation foreman in Pickens County was mutilated and murdered after he complained about his wages. The assistant superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Clarke County reported three freedmen hanged

⁴⁷J. Silsby to E. M. Strieby, December 26, 1866, American Missionary Association Archives; Trowbridge, *The South: A Tour*, 429; *New York Times*, June 12, 1865.

⁴⁸*Official Records*, I Series, XLIX, Part II, 954; *New York Times*, June 12, 1865; U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 2, 70-71; Claude M. Fuess, *Biography of Carl Schurz* (New York, 1932), 135.

⁴⁹U. S. Congress, *Senate Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 2, 18, 72; James T. Sawyer to J. J. Giers, May 30, 1866, American Missionary Association Archives; T. B. Callis to W. Swayne, June 7, 1866, Swayne Papers.

by their former masters in April and May. In the same county a planter hanged a freedwoman in the presence of his neighbors only three weeks after he had killed the woman's husband. Near Bladon Springs a Negro was shot outside his former master's premises and dragged into the stable to make it appear that he had been caught stealing. In the same area a freedman was chained to a tree and burned to death. A Bladon Springs preacher claimed the road in Choctaw County "stunk with dead bodies of servants who fled their masters."⁵⁰

Evidence from various sources indicated numerous crimes and murders committed against freedmen. The total number could not be ascertained but the figures were not necessary to prove that violence was a common characteristic of Alabama.⁵¹

Even if there had been no violence, the condition of Alabama freedmen would have been appalling after their emancipation in 1865. They were without education and many economic necessities. Sudden emancipation placed them in a state of political, social, and economic limbo. They needed assistance to adjust to their new status. The Federal government took a major step in providing such assistance on March 3, 1865, by creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The Secretary of War was directed to issue provisions, clothing, and temporary shelter for suffering refugees and freedmen. The President appointed Major General Oliver O. Howard as Bureau Commissioner. Assistant commissioners were appointed for each insurrectionary state.⁵²

⁵⁰U. S. Congress, *House Reports*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 30, part III, 8; Walter L. Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction* (2 vols.; Cleveland, Ohio, 1906), II, 68-69.

⁵¹Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I, 69; John A. Carpenter, "Atrocities in the Reconstruction Period," *Journal of Negro History*, XLVII (October, 1962), 237, 241-242.

⁵²U. S. *Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-508; U. S. Department of War, *General Orders of the War Department*, No. 91, May 12, 1865, hereafter cited as *General Orders*.

General Wager Swayne was designated assistant commissioner for Alabama on June 20, 1865. Swayne, a native of Ohio, was the son of a U.S. Supreme Court justice and one of Howard's former officers.⁵³ The Bureau did not go into operation under Swayne's direction until July, 1865. Prior to his arrival the Alabama Bureau was conducted by Federal military authorities. The organization at first was experimental but began to take shape by November, 1865. Bureau officers were to advise and protect freedmen and to care for the sick and impoverished.⁵⁴

The most pressing task facing the Bureau was the issue of rations to starving black and white Alabamians. A ration was supposed to feed a person for one week and usually consisted of corn meal, pork or fat back, flour, and sugar. Children under fourteen were allowed half rations.⁵⁵ Thousands of people depended upon Bureau rations for food. In November, 1865, more than 70,000 rations were issued. It was thought that less food would have to be provided the next year, but in the early part of 1866 the material condition of Alabama became worse. With the scant crop of 1865 exhausted, the situation became desperate. In June alone, 792,349 rations were issued. During an eleven-month period, November, 1865, to September, 1866, the Freedmen's Bureau issued a total of 3,789,788 rations in Alabama. Approximately 166,589 whites and 72,115 freedmen received rations.⁵⁶

⁵³Bethel, "Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama," 49; DuBose, *Alabama's Tragic Decade*, 32.

⁵⁴*General Orders*, No. 102, May 31, 1865.

⁵⁵U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, No. 11, 49.

⁵⁶Bethel, "Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama," 64; W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, September 30, 1867, Parsons Personal Papers. From November, 1865, to October, 1866, 54,381 white adults and 112,208 white children received rations as compared to 32,928 black adults and 39,187 black children. From December, 1866, to August, 1867, 40,341 white adults and 86,906 white children, a total of 127,247 received rations. For the same nine-month period 16,457 black adults and 25,134 black children, a total of 41,591, were issued rations.

Since more whites than blacks received rations, there were some charges of fraud and discrimination. The superintendent of the Bureau in northern Alabama claimed that "I am confident if rations are delivered to local authorities for distribution, the colored people would receive no benefit from them."⁵⁷ These accusations were difficult to substantiate and were probably exaggerated. There were very large numbers of indigent whites in northern Alabama which accounted for a part of the racial disparity of issued rations.⁵⁸

The Bureau was aided by other state and private relief agencies. The National Freedmen's Relief Association provided clothing and food for Alabama freedmen. The Southern Famine Relief Committee of New York was a major source of food. Supplies sent to Alabama were consigned to M. H. Cruikshank, commissioner of destitution, and to the assistant commissioner of the Bureau. These rations were distributed by selected citizens who worked in conjunction with the judges of probate and Bureau agents. The American Union Commission also issued a relief appeal in behalf of indigent blacks in Alabama. Still the Freedmen's Bureau contributed the most toward the relief of blacks and whites in Alabama.⁵⁹

Freedmen who were without food, shelter, and gainful employment were gathered in temporary Bureau colonies until they could be relocated. The colonies were centrally located and provided aid to the indigent, sick, and aged of both races. These Bureau camps consisted of a number of cabins for orphans, a shelter for persons in transit, and a hospital for the sick.⁶⁰ The colony system was established to provide freedmen with a place

⁵⁷J. B. Callis to W. Swayne, June 7, 1866, Swayne Papers.

⁵⁸W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, Parsons Personal Papers.

⁵⁹*Harper's Weekly*, X (February 10, 1866), 83; *New York Times*, June 6, 1865; *Mobile Weekly Advertiser*, January 6, 1866; *Huntsville Daily Independent*, January 17, 1866; W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, September 30, 1867, Parsons Personal Papers.

⁶⁰*New York Times*, August 17, 1865; *Montgomery Daily Advertiser*, September 9, 1865.

to stay until they could find work. Those blacks who desired labor erected buildings and shelters for no compensation other than food and shelter. In September, 1865, the freedmen's colony in Mobile reported the arrival of many old and indigent blacks who were driven off the plantation because they were no longer useful to their former masters. In Huntsville a colony occupied an abandoned plantation. Under the Bureau's direction freedmen were growing 400 acres of cotton and corn⁶¹

Temporary food and shelter were not enough. The freedmen also needed medical assistance. The Bureau began to establish hospitals in September, 1865. Clothing and blankets rejected by the army as defective, rations, medicine, and fuel were supplied to the hospitals.⁶² During the smallpox epidemic in the winter of 1865 the hospitals treated the sick, burned infected garments and supplied new ones to convalescents. Freedmen's Bureau hospitals were located in Mobile, Selma, Garland, Montgomery, Demopolis, Huntsville, and Talladega. During the period from 1865 to 1867, the Bureau hospitals treated approximately 9,859 freedmen and 473 white patients. When the accumulations of sick were released, the hospitals remained occupied by victims of criminal assault and accidents.⁶³

The Freedmen's Bureau or some similar relief organization was necessary in Alabama during the months immediately following the war. The provisions of rations, clothing, shelter, and medical attention prevented starvation and death. But the Freedmen's Bureau's efforts provided only temporary aid to the destitute blacks.⁶⁴ Obviously Alabama freedmen required a more permanent type of assistance. The legal recognition of the former slaves as free men in Alabama became a necessary step

⁶¹W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, Parsons Personal Papers; U. S. Congress, *House Executive Documents*, 39th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 1, 742.

⁶²W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 31, 1866, Parsons Personal Papers; W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, October 4, 1865, Parsons Official Papers.

⁶³W. Swayne to L. E. Parsons, September 30, 1867, Parsons Personal Papers.

⁶⁴St. Louis *Post Dispatch*, December 21, 1865; Cincinnati *Commercial*, March 17, 1866.

in their behalf. Freedmen hoped to gain equality before the law, the right to testify in courts, and sit on juries. They saw no reason to be deprived of the privileges of freedom which other Alabamians enjoyed.⁶⁵ Whites could not be depended upon to treat the former slaves fairly.⁶⁶ Therefore, freedmen needed adequate state laws to guarantee their rights as well as sincere assistance from individuals upon whom they could rely. Alabama's situation required such measures if the state was to emerge from the depths of chaos and violence.

⁶⁵James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1964), 174; W. Fiske to G. Whipple, March 14, 1866, in American Missionary Association Archives; St. Louis *Post Dispatch*, December 21, 1865.

⁶⁶Herbert Aptheker, *A Documentary History of the Negro in the United States* (New York, 1951), 533.

BIRMINGHAM AND THE "DIXIECRAT" CONVENTION OF 1948

by

J. Barton Starr

Birmingham is a symbol of how much and how desperately one-party Southerners feel moved to do in order to have any place to go when they are unwilling to vote Democratic. The place they are building themselves is of temporary—not to say momentary—construction. It has cost them considerable pains, in the course of which they have made a rather frantic spectacle of themselves.¹

The year 1948 would prove to be one of the most interesting in the annals of American presidential elections. Early in the year the race was already shaping up as a three-way contest with Henry A. Wallace's People's Progressive Party entering the field against the two major parties. But this was just the beginning. Southern conservatives, angered over President Truman's call for civil rights legislation, entered the fray. First, they joined the political scramble as a dissatisfied faction of the Democratic party set on unseating Truman in the national convention. Soon, however, many of these dissenters were to leave the party of their fathers in an open revolt against Truman and his policies.

The year 1948 also seemed to be an exceptionally opportune time for such a split as it was assumed that the "accidental" President could not be reelected. As one Alabama State Senator wrote, "President Truman is out of the picture, he is a lost ball in high grass of discord and unrest."² With the loss of the presidency, of course, would go the loss of patronage. Therefore,

¹St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, July 16, 1948.

²Tully A. Goodwin to Marion Rushton, April 20, 1948. Marion Rushton Papers, Correspondence (Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala.). Rushton was a National Committeeman from Alabama.

when the Democratic party's period of rule seemed near its conclusion, the revolt broke into open political warfare.³ One contemporary political writer did not take the revolt as seriously. He wrote,

It has become Southern custom since 1932 for the Claghorns to rise up early in an election year and serve notice, in the name of Robert E. Lee and White womanhood, that they are not to be taken for granted by the Democratic Party. They have their pride—and they also have their price. President Truman's special request for civil-rights legislation touched off this year's rising, but there is little doubt that it would have come in any case. It has been part of the election scene ever since the Democrats abolished the Southern veto at Presidential conventions by scrapping the two-thirds vote requirement.⁴

Even before Truman requested congressional action on civil rights, there were some indications that a revolt was in the making, thus giving some credence to the above mentioned serio-comic observation. In his inaugural speech on January 20, 1948, Governor Fielding L. Wright, of Mississippi sounded the call for revolt. He argued that the civil rights proposals were "aimed to wreck the South and our institutions," and even though he regretted the prospect of a split in the Democratic party, "vital principles and eternal truths transcend party lines, and the day is now at hand when determined action must be taken."⁵ On January 26, at the annual meeting of the State Democratic Executive Committee of Alabama, a resolution was unanimously passed which stated in part: "That the Democrats of Alabama would be most deeply hurt, shocked and disillusioned should any attack upon racial segregation be adopted as a plank in the 1948 party platform or directly or indirectly as an expression of party policy That such an action by the

³Richard Hofstadter, "From Calhoun to Dixiecrats," *Social Research*, XVI (June, 1949), 143.

⁴*The Nation*, CLXVI (February 14, 1948), 174.

⁵V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York, 1949), 330.

National leadership of the Democratic party could but force every Southerner into the undesired position of determining which is the greater loyalty, that to the South, or that to the party."⁶ Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi took up the call for revolt on February 7, when he proposed that the Southern states "choose independent Presidential electors who would ignore the convention's nominee and cast their votes for a 'distinguished Southerner'" Arkansas Governor Ben T. Laney asserted that the South was in "a predicament between two men who are standing for something obnoxious to the South." On civil rights, "there is very little choice between the candidates"⁸

The theoretical rationale for the Southern revolt was written by an Alabama lawyer, living in New York. In 1947, Charles Wallace Collins' *Whither Solid South?* came off the presses⁹ and was soon known as the "bible of Southern revolt"¹⁰ The basis of Collins' book is a common one today: the Southern states could hold the balance of power in the Electoral College and, if unable to name the President, at least prevent the election of an unacceptable candidate. It was even possible, in the event of a deadlock between the candidates of the two major parties, that the Southern balance of power could be used to elect a Southern President.¹¹

⁶Gladys King Burns, "The Alabama Dixiecrat Revolt of 1948" (unpublished Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1965), 179. See this work for a good full treatment of the States' Rights movement in Alabama. See also Vincent Dooley, "United States Senator James Thomas Heflin and the Democratic Party Revolt in Alabama" (unpublished Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1963).

⁷*The Nation*, CLXVI (February 14, 1948), 174.

⁸*New York Times*, July 17, 1948.

⁹Hofstadter, 143. See also Sarah McCulloh, "The Ideology of the 'Dixiecrat' Movement," *Social Forces*, XXX (December, 1951), 162-71.

¹⁰*Birmingham Post*, July 17, 1948.

¹¹Charles Wallace Collins, *Whither Solid South? A Study of Politics and Race Relations* (New Orleans, 1947), 262. See also his book, *The Fourteenth Amendment and the States* (Boston, 1912). See also *Newsweek*, XXXII (July 26, 1948), 21. Collins attended the Birmingham convention in July: *Birmingham Post*, July 19, 1948. There seems to have been some doubt as to where Collins was residing. In a letter from Marion Rushton to H. Coleman Long, February 2, 1948,

On May 10, 1948, in Jackson, Mississippi, a four-hour meeting of dissidents was held in which "the States Rights Democrats uncovered a political potpourri, in which enthusiasm clashed with ennui, political personages mingled with political unknowns and the Georgia delegation in effect 'walked out' because of the threat to bolt the Democratic party."¹² The estimates as to the number of "delegates" present at Jackson vary from one thousand to three thousand¹³ but there seems to be little doubt as to the political strength represented. At this conference designed to "secede formally from the president"¹⁴ only four states—Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and South Carolina—joined actively in the work.¹⁵ It was also noted that "governors and political leaders in actual control in other states seemed to be wary of the convention."¹⁶

The keynote address was given by South Carolina's Strom Thurmond who asserted that "When this campaign is over, leaders in both political parties will realize we no longer intend to be a door mat on which Presidential candidates may wipe their political shoes every time they want to appeal to minority groups in doubtful states."¹⁷ Accompanied by wild cheering and announcing that "Harry S. Truman never has been elected President of the United States and never will be," the governor declared "We are going to fight come what may. We are going to preserve our civilization in the South. Not all the laws of Washington, or all the bayonets of the Army can force the

Rushton Papers, Correspondence, Rushton states that Collins was formerly of Gallion, Alabama, "now living near Washington. . . ." Alexander Heard, *A Two-Party South?* (Chapel Hill, 1952), 32, says that Collins was "resident in Maryland. . . ."

¹²New York Times, May 11, 1948.

¹³Newsweek, XXXI (May 24, 1948), 23; New York Times, July 16, 1948.

¹⁴Newsweek, XXXI (May 24, 1948), 23.

¹⁵U. S. News and World Report, XXIV (May 21, 1948), 24.

¹⁶New York Times, July 16, 1948.

¹⁷States' Rights Information and Speakers Handbook (Jackson, Mississippi, 1948 [?]), 25.

Negro into our homes, our churches, and our schools, or into our places of recreation and amusement.”¹⁸

The conference then got down to the business at hand and decided that “if it becomes ‘necessary and appropriate’ to project . . . a candidate in the November election, the nominating will be done in Birmingham on or about July 17.” The conference then declared that their states would not support Truman or any other nominee of the party unless the party reaffirmed its faith in states’ rights, “pledged unqualified support thereto and repudiate[d] the President’s so-called but misnamed civil rights program.” The Jackson conference really just recessed over to the Birmingham meeting, making provision for a campaign committee “which was authorized to solicit funds and spread ideas of the convention’s objectives.”¹⁹

In an important deviation the Georgia delegation refused to participate officially in the conference and attended only as “observers.” They asserted, “We do not favor, nor would we commit the Democrats of Georgia to bolt the Democratic Party, nor do anything which could aid in the establishment of a third party.”²⁰ This action was the forerunner of Georgia’s later refusal to join officially in the “Dixiecrat” movement.

The Democratic National Convention opened in Philadelphia on July 12, 1948, and immediately speculation began concerning a southern “walkout.” To the *Birmingham News* it was appar-

¹⁸*Newsweek*, XXXI (May 24, 1948), 23. The official copy of Thurmond’s address printed by the campaign committee in the *States’ Rights Information and Speakers Handbook*, 25, gives a different account of the latter part of this speech:

We of the South are a proud people. We come from a stock that has never truckled even in the face of defeat or rule by Federal bayonet.

We meet here today with no apology. We want no one to be mistaken or misled. We are going to fight, as long as we have breath, for the rights of our states and our people under the American Constitution; and come what may, we are going to preserve our civilization in the South.

¹⁹*Birmingham News*, May 11, 1948.

²⁰*Ibid.*

ent that the revolt would occur and that Southern Democrats would meet in Birmingham on July 17 as scheduled.²¹ The rumored "walk-out" became reality with the strong civil rights plank which the convention adopted under the leadership of Mayor Hubert Humphrey of Minneapolis. The plank included a fair employment practices act, anti-lynching, anti-segregation, and anti-poll tax laws.²² This strong civil rights plank and another calling for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act (which had been adopted in 1947 with help from Southern congressmen) "convinced many Dixie delegates that there was no room for them in the national party."²³ On July 14, Alabama Democratic party chairman Gessner T. McCorvey stated that "it is now quite apparent that the action of the Philadelphia convention will be such that the Birmingham meeting will be held."²⁴ The first definite word on the rump convention came on July 15, just before the Mississippi delegation and half of the Alabama delegates bolted the convention. W. W. Wright of Jackson, Mississippi, told James E. Mills, editor of the *Birmingham Post*, that the "grass roots meeting" was "definitely on."²⁵

Governor Fielding Wright of Mississippi announced the bolters would meet when he walked out of the Philadelphia con-

²¹*Birmingham News*, July 12, 1948. Rushton Papers, Speeches: Sometime before the Democratic National Convention Marion Rushton assured the people of Alabama "that a monster meeting of Alabama States Rights Democrats will be held in Alabama after the National Conventions and before we make any commitments about our electoral vote. This meeting will be open to every States Rights Democrat in Alabama . . . and your approval of a program will be obtained before we commit Alabama's electoral vote to anybody."

²²*Birmingham News*, July 16, 1948.

²³Delores Ann Hobbes, "The States' Rights Movement of 1948" (unpublished Master's thesis, Samford University, 1968), 31.

²⁴*Birmingham News*, July 14, 1948. See also Gessner T. McCorvey to Marion Rushton, July 12, 1948, Rushton Papers, Correspondence. In his article "The South Is Not Helpless in the Presidential Election of 1960," *The Alabama Lawyer*, XXI (January, 1960), 89-100, McCorvey interprets the events of 1948 and attempts to show how the lessons learned in 1948 could be applied to 1960 so that the Electoral vote of the South could be united "to preserve our civilization." The article is really an apologia for racism.

²⁵*Birmingham Post*, July 15, 1948.

vention: "The Mississippi delegation is on its way to Birmingham"²⁶ He then issued the official call for the convention: "The chips are down. The die is cast. We must make Birmingham the beginning of our Electoral College fight to save the South."²⁷ He later added, "It has been made clear at Philadelphia that the greatest discrimination existing in this country today is not racial or religious, but discrimination against the South."²⁸ Former Governor Frank M. Dixon of Alabama rallied his fellow citizens by asserting, "The National Democratic Party has put a knife in the heart of the South. I urge the good Democrats of Alabama to attend the Birmingham states' rights meeting to register their protests and adopt plans for the future."²⁹ The hope of the rebellious Democrats was summed up well by a Washington, D.C. man who said, "It takes only one match to start a big fire when the grass is dry—and the grass is awfully dry."³⁰

As the "Dixiecrats" gathered in Birmingham the range of their optimism varied. One delegate predicted that the national party would not be able to carry a single state. Other delegates conceded that they might carry a "half-dozen" states.³¹ More realistically, the *Birmingham Age-Herald* summed up the prospects:

Just what today is the extent of the bolt? You can count out Kentucky, which voted for Truman in the balloting, and North Carolina, part of whose delegates supported Truman. Out also will be Texas and Tennessee. In both these states, the Democrats, in state conventions, pledged

²⁶*Birmingham Age-Herald*, July 15, 1948.

²⁷*New York Times*, July 16, 1948. See also Governor Fielding Wright to Frank M. Dixon, July 25, 1948, Frank M. Dixon Papers (Correspondence, Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala.). The Dixon Papers are very important concerning the inner workings of the "Dixiecrat" movement. They contain very little on the Birmingham gathering, however.

²⁸*Washington Post*, July 17, 1948.

²⁹*Birmingham News*, July 15, 1948.

³⁰*Birmingham Age-Herald*, July 17, 1948.

their electors to support the nominee of the Philadelphia convention. Virginia was reported yesterday as uncertain about its future course, which would seem to indicate its support of the bolt weakening. As to Georgia, it is significant that after the convention was over, Sen. [Richard] Russell, for whom the anti-Truman Southerners had all cast their ballots, announced that he would support the ticket. In Florida, Sen. [Claude] Pepper declared he was standing behind the ticket. The Louisiana delegation was reported inclined to accept the results. That doesn't leave much.³²

Despite this sobering appraisal of their strength, angry but optimistic states' righters began to pour into Birmingham in the evening of July 16, ready to attend the opening session scheduled for 10:00 the next morning. As the *Age-Herald* reported, "Birmingham took on the air of a real political convention city last night as fighting-mad Dixiecrats assemgled here to renew their states rights fight."³³ Temporary headquarters were set up in rooms 922-924 of the Tutwiler Hotel. The meeting itself was to take place in the Municipal Auditorium, which was being furnished free of charge.³⁴

With the late notice that the "Dixiecrats" would meet in Birmingham's Municipal Auditorium, Ted Brownell, Manager of the building, was faced with the mammoth task of getting the hall ready by Saturday. The job began early Friday morning when the wrestling ring from Monday night was taken down and the large fans oiled. Olin Horton was charged with the job of decorating the huge building. He used state flags and standards for each state to mark the delegate seating. The use of Confederate flags and the displaying of pictures of prominent Southerners—either living or dead—were avoided in order to "stay away from any sectional atmosphere" and thus to draw non-Southern support. Both of these prohibitions were neglected

³¹Hobbes, 35.

³²Birmingham *Age-Herald*, July 16, 1948.

³³*Ibid.*, July 17, 1948. See also Birmingham *News*, July 16, 1948.

³⁴Birmingham *News*, July 16, 1948; Birmingham *Age-Herald*, July 20, 1948.

during the course of the convention. American flags were on both sides of the entrance and on the stage, and red, white and blue bunting was placed around the auditorium.

A band was hired to play "Suwanee River," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Carry Me Back to Ole Virginia," "Deep in the Heart of Texas," and, of course, "Dixie" at the proper times throughout the meeting. The advance choice of songs was somewhat incongruous in light of Horton's attempt to prevent sectionalism in his decorations. The orchestra pit and special tables near the platform were reserved for the newsmen. Special wiring, lighting, and broadcasting equipment were installed.³⁵ The American Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the National Broadcasting Company were all present to provide radio coverage. NBC also televised the gathering by filming it and then showing the film from the network office in New York City. A number of top news commentators—Griffings Bancroft of CBS, W. W. Chaplin of NBC, and Edwin A. Hill, Earl Godwin, Martin Agronsky, and Tris Coffin of ABC—were on hand for convention coverage. The *Birmingham News* estimated that between 100-150 newsmen and broadcasters sent news of the convention throughout the nation.³⁶

When registration opened at the Tutwiler Hotel at 2:00 p.m. on July 16, a wild assortment of people was present as delegates. A few quotations as to the qualifications for "delegates" will indicate why this was true. The *Birmingham News* reported that "the meeting is open to the public, and every Democrat in Alabama is invited" When the question was posed, "who qualifies for a badge?" the reply was simply "anybody who wants one Just so they're believers." The convention, whatever else it may have been, was completely democratic: "Everybody was a delegate. Anybody who felt the

³⁵Hobbes, 37.

³⁶*Birmingham News*, July 15, 1948; July 16, 1948; July 17, 1948, July 18, 1948. According to the *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 20, 1948, "By 1 o'clock the American Broadcasting Company had cut the convention off its network because it was too inflammatory."

spirit move him paraded." Thus it was that "except for Alabama, Mississippi, and one or two other states, the delegations [were] short of support from official party organizations or public officials," and were composed of "political outs and has-beens." The official badge was a small round, red, white, and blue button declaring "Southern States Rights Democrats."³⁷

Thirteen states were represented by placards on the convention floor, but few represented real political power. The heart of the conference was the Alabama and Mississippi delegations who had walked out of the Philadelphia convention and who were still "boiling mad at the steamroller tactics of the Philadelphia convention and the slights and insults heaped upon them in that city of brotherly love."³⁸ In the Virginia section four students from the University of Virginia and a young woman from Alexandria who had just stopped off in Birmingham on her way home from New Orleans represented their native state. Nobody in the North Carolina and Kentucky sections could be identified as being from those regions. Oklahoma had three delegates and former Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray.³⁹ The seventy-nine-year old, half-blind, and half-deaf former governor arrived without his luggage which had been lost on the bus trip to Birmingham but carrying copies of the book *The Place of the Negro* under his arm and boasting that he was "the man who introduced Jim Crow in Oklahoma."⁴⁰ Louisiana, Florida, and Texas had between fifteen and twenty-five representatives each. South Carolina had three of its Democratic National Convention delegates along with a large retinue from Governor Thurmond's office. Tennessee was represented by four students from the

³⁷Birmingham *News*, July 16, 1948; July 15, 1948, July 16, 1948; July 18, 1948; Birmingham *Age-Herald*, July 17, 1948; Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948.

³⁸Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948. The thirteen states were Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Arkansas.

³⁹New York *Times*, July 18, 1948.

⁴⁰Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948. Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, July 17, 1948: Murray's statement was, "I'm the man who introduced Jim Crow in Oklahoma. If they pass those civil rights laws, there'll be hell to pay in the north."

University of Tennessee, six students from Cumberland University, and five people who said they were "sympathizers." J. H. Ballew of Nashville—a delegate to the Philadelphia convention—sat at the back of the auditorium under a placard marked "others." Georgia, with no official representatives, had eight "interested" and "sympathetic" "believers" in her section. There were twelve delegates from Arkansas, one of whom had been a delegate to the national convention.⁴¹ There were twenty "delegates" present from outside the former Confederate states.⁴²

Five Governors—Ben T. Laney (Arkansas), Fielding Wright (Mississippi), James E. "Big Jim" Folsom (Alabama), Strom Thurmond (South Carolina), and William N. Tuck (Virginia)—at some time attended the conference but only Wright and Thurmond participated actively. Folsom gave a brief welcoming address. A number of other political figures gathered in Birmingham also: former Governors Hugh White (Mississippi), Sam Jones (Louisiana), "Alfalfa Bill" Murray (Oklahoma), Frank Dixon (Alabama), Senators James O. Eastland and John C. Stennis of Mississippi, Handy Ellis of Alabama (chairman of the Alabama national convention delegation), United States Representatives John Bell Williams and William P. Colmer of Mississippi. Just as significantly, however, "recognized leaders of political machines such as Edward H. (Boss) Crump of Tennessee, Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, Herman Talmadge of Georgia and Gov. Earl K. Long of Louisiana, . . . declined to take part in the convention . . . [did] not send any emissaries."⁴³

There were a large number of college students who attended the convention, some of them for serious reasons and other simply because the conclave offered an excuse to cut classes. The colleges represented were the University of Alabama, Ala-

⁴¹New York *Times*, July 18, 1948.

⁴²Birmingham *Age-Herald*, July 18, 1948. The states represented were Indiana (1), Pennsylvania (5), Illinois (2), California (2), Maryland (4), Washington, D. C. (1), and Colorado (1). Oklahoma, as already mentioned, had four delegates in attendance.

⁴³New York *Times*, July 19, 1948. See also Hobbes, 40; New York *Times*, July 17, 1948.

bama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University), Howard College (now Samford University), Birmingham-Southern College, Mississippi State College, University of Tennessee, University of Georgia, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Virginia, University of Mississippi, Alabama College, Cumberland University, and Loyola of the South. These students played an important role in the convention by furnishing much of the "lung power." The fifty-five students from Ole Miss congregated in front of the speaker's stand and yelled "To hell with Truman." "To Hell with Truman" garnered the honor of being the noisiest demonstrators at the convention.⁴⁴

A number of "professional haters" were also at the convention. Gerald L. K. Smith, referred to by one writer as the "rabble-rousing, race-baiting ex-preacher from Louisiana," and National Director and presidential candidate of the Christian Nationalist Crusade, was present. Smith said of the gathering: "It will go down in history as one of the most significant things that has ever happened. It challenges every white man to fulfill his destiny as it relates to the future of America."⁴⁵ Jonathan E. Perkins, an organizer for Smith and author of *The Jews Have Got the Atomic Bomb*, was in attendance. J. B. Stoner of Chattanooga, founder of the Anti-Jewish Party, apparently representing his own organization, was present. Stoner's platform called for a constitutional amendment to make it a capital crime to be Jewish. A contemporary said of him, "Stoner plays too rough for even Grand Dragon Doc Green who banished him from his job as kleagle (recruiter) for the Klan." Others with unusual affiliations who were in Birmingham for the convention included Mrs. Jessie Welch Jenkins of Georgia, President of the National Patrick Henry Organization. She wanted to abolish both major parties. E. C. Boswell, author of the Boswell Amendment which aimed at preventing Alabama Negroes from voting,

⁴⁴Birmingham *Post*, July 17, 1948; Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948.

⁴⁵Birmingham *Post*, July 19, 1948. See also *Colliers*, CXXII (October 9, 1948), 14-15; *Time*, LII (September 6, 1948), 17; Birmingham *Age-Herald*, July 19, 1948; Birmingham *Post*, July 19, 1948: It is to Thurmond's credit that he rejected Smith's endorsement: "We do not invite, and we do not need, the support of Gerald L. K. Smith or any other rabble-rousers who use race hatred to inflame the emotions of the people."

was also present. One observer wrote, "Officially, the hate fringe took no part in the Dixiecrat meeting. But men of kindred views did."⁴⁶

When the session opened Saturday morning, July 17, it was estimated that about six thousand "delegates" were present.⁴⁷ "But," according to *Time* Magazine, "the meeting had more lung power than political strength."⁴⁸ The states' rights convention was scheduled to open at 10:00 Saturday morning, July 17, 1948. The opening was delayed about an hour, however. By 10:50 the Municipal Auditorium was packed with most of the seats filled except for the top balcony which was "usually reserved for Negroes. It was empty."⁴⁹ Before the opening of the conference pickets for Henry A. Wallace's People's Progressive Party paraded in front of the auditorium under the leadership of Robert Travis, chairman of the third party in Alabama. The pickets carried signs which said "Win With Wallace" and "Down With Lynching." Travis said of the picketing, "We just want the decent people of the South to know there are some opposed to such actions as these here." The pickets were booed and heckled and left after about fifteen minutes.⁵⁰

The conference was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Alabama state Democratic party chairman Gessner T. McCorvey. A local paper described the scene:

It was a responsive, excited, sometimes hysterical crowd—and the convention orators made the most of it.

The magic names were Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. They never failed to bring swelling roars from the audience.

⁴⁶*Collier's*, CXXII (October 9, 1948), 14-15.

⁴⁷St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, July 18, 1948.

⁴⁸*Time*, LII (July 26, 1948), 15.

⁴⁹Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948. See also St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, July 18, 1948.

⁵⁰Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 18, 1948; St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, July 17, 1948.

The rat-tat-tat of "Dixie" played by a swing band, raised the people screaming to their feet.

The phrasemakers talked over and over about "the dagger in the back of the South." Recognizing its cue, the crowd yelled back with one, vast voice.

The swaying, state standards, Confederate banners, gyrating paraders, all bathed in the unreal lights of newsreel cameras, made a fantastic scene.⁵¹

After the convention was called to order by McCorvey, the invocation was given by the Rev. John Buchanan of Southside Baptist Church in Birmingham who called upon God to "purge from [the delegates'] hearts all prejudice." Ruby Mercer, Metropolitan Opera and Broadway musical comedy star, next sang the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "Dixie"—the latter more than once upon demand by the audience who cheered and joined in the singing.⁵² Birmingham Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor was introduced, and he invited the Philadelphia delegates who had walked out of the convention to take their "seats of honor" on the stage. He then welcomed the "interested people" to Birmingham and assured them that they would find the fan-cooled auditorium "a lot more comfortable than the one they have up there in Philadelphia—and the people a lot more friendly."⁵³

Walter Sillers, Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives, was elected permanent chairman of the convention. In accepting the position he said, "We are here to show that constitutional government is not dead in this nation, despite what happened in Philadelphia." He concluded, "We're here to give warning to those at Philadelphia that principle still prevails in this land—that principle for which we will fight until doomsday." Siller's acceptance speech was followed by a number of

⁵¹Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948.

⁵²Birmingham *Age-Herald*, July 17, 1948.

⁵³Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948. Connor also stated the obvious fact that the delegates would "not find a Negro lawyer speaking from this platform. . ." as in Philadelphia.

preliminary speeches by Senator Stennis, Frank Upchurch (chairman of the Florida delegation to the national convention), and others. These speeches centered around opposition to Truman and the threat of national disaster if the South's segregation plan was abolished. During the course of these speeches, one of the speakers declared that "we have no choice between the little man with the sickening smile and the little man with the little mustache."⁵⁴

Chairman Sillers then presented former Governor Frank M. Dixon of Alabama who was to give the keynote address. Dixon did not know he was to give this speech until 7:00 a.m. Saturday; he nevertheless tore into the national parties with all the skill of his political experience. He began by asserting that "This is a gathering of militant followers of those Democratic principles near and dear to us all." He said that the reason for the convention was apparent to "all of us who heard the jeers when Alabama and Mississippi walked out at Philadelphia Jeers from sections where not a single elective officer, not even a justice of the peace, is a Democrat." Dixon went on to charge that the Democratic Convention at Philadelphia was trying to "perpetrate a police state in this nation and set up a social revolution in the South." He told the conclave that it could either choose new candidates or place anti-Truman electors on the ballots. In either case the object was to throw the election into Congress where "an outstanding American" might be selected. He further asserted that the passage of the Philadelphia civil rights plank would mean a great concentration of power in the hands of the federal government; such a concentration, he argued, would lead to a "federal gestapo." Dixon said that the plank would mean "our children will be subjected to forced intermingling with those of the other races." He concluded that "in this day the Democratic Party has sunk so low as to borrow racial minorities in an attempt to bolster itself."

⁵⁴New York *Times*, July 18, 1948. See also Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948; Hobbes, 44.

But, the Alabamian indignantly added, "The South will fight the attempt to mongrelize our people."⁵⁵

When Dixon concluded his thirty minute address a wild twenty minute demonstration took place. "Delegates and just plain spectators leaped to their feet, started cheering and shouting, then marched along the aisles throughout the large hall, waving flags, waving their hands and arms above their heads"—all without benefit of aid from the band which had been dismissed during Dixon's speech. Birmingham-Southern College students carried a large picture of Robert E. Lee and a large Confederate flag down the aisles to the accompaniment of shouts of "We want Dixon," "Dixie wants Dixon," and "To hell with Truman." These Alabama sentiments were countered by Ole Miss students yelling "Fielding L. Wright and States' Rights."⁵⁶

The last speech in the morning session was given by State Representative Lloyd E. Price of Ft. Worth, Texas. After denouncing "so-called Northern and Eastern liberals," he waged war on the historian Arnold J. Toynbee because of his analysis of the South as a backward section of the United States. Reaching for the ultimate insult, Price asserted, "There isn't a student in a Negro College in the South who doesn't know more about history than Toynbee." He concluded that the whole racial problem of the United States was the fault of New Englanders because they were the first to bring the "howling, screaming

⁵⁵For the full text of Dixon's speech see the *Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948, or "History in the Making," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly*, VIII (Spring, 1946), 15-24. The "1946" date in the latter citation is the correct date on the magazine as publication was several years behind. See also Hobbes, 42-45; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 18, 1948; *Birmingham News*, July 17, 1948; *Newsweek*, XXXII (May 24, 1948), 21. The *Anniston Star*, July 18, 1948, said of Dixon's speech: "the address he made yesterday sounded, in some respects, as though he were addressing the Ku Klux Klan convocation. It was racism and sectionalism at its worst and will certainly do more harm than good to the cause he purported to represent."

⁵⁶*Birmingham News*, July 17, 1948; *Newsweek*, XXXII (May 24, 1948), 21; Hobbes, 47.

savages" to America. The convention recessed at 12:50 p.m. until 2:30 the same day.⁵⁷

During the recess period Arkansas Governor Ben T. Laney, who had been chosen chairman of the permanent states' rights campaign committee in Jackson, broke with the convention. He had remained at the Philadelphia convention after the "walk-out;" afterwards he attended the Birmingham conference "only as an invited guest." At the Birmingham gathering he had been conspicuous by his absence from several caucuses and from the open sessions. He issued a statement withdrawing his name from consideration for President asserting that he wanted to defeat the civil rights plank but through the official Democratic organization in each state and not through a fourth party. His prepared statement issued during the recess was thus a call for unity.⁵⁸

"The vagueness of official statements and the conflicting reports from states'-rights leaders in other areas combined to leave up in the air the exact purposes for which the convention was . . . called."⁵⁹ This opinion was prevalent in the newspapers, and, indeed, vagueness seemed to envelope the convention. The delegates differed over the best method of implementing their dissent. Some of them wanted to name presidential and vice-presidential candidates, while others felt the struggle against the civil rights plank would be served better by "waging a fight to free presidential electors." There was even uncertainty and disagreement over terminology. The leaders of the meeting

⁵⁷Hobbes, 48. The *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 19, 1948, reported that Price referred to the works of Toynbee as "the Koran of the pinkish, leftist, liberal intellectuals in the U. S."

⁵⁸*Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948; July 16, 1948. Laney's statement said in part: "The spirit of obstinacy and revenge is not the spirit of the Southland. . . . Whatever is done must be done through and by the official Democratic organization in each state," *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 19, 1948. When asked the day before the conference if he would accept the nomination if it was offered to him, the *Washington Post*, July 17, 1948, reported he replied, "I don't care to answer that question at the moment." The *Florence Times*, July 16, 1948, reported his reply as "I would have to see about that."

⁵⁹*New York Times*, July 17, 1948.

insisted that the gathering was a "conference" and not a "convention" and that there were no "delegates" but "just people interested in our cause." The *Birmingham News* commented that this insistence on terminology reflected doubt among leaders about the effectiveness of the revolt. The "delegates" were unsure even about the reason for the conference. Some of them saw it as just a warm-up session for a full convention in August when candidates would be nominated.⁶⁰

It soon became apparent that few people actually knew what was going on and that a small group composed of Horace Wilkinson, Frank Dixon, W. W. Wright, and Sydney Smyer (all from Alabama or Mississippi) made the decisions for the convention. Still, even Wilkinson, when asked who the nominees would be, replied that he "guessed" they would be Thurmond and Wright. About an hour later he nominated both of them.

Following Laney's withdrawal from the race, speculation was rampant about who would receive the nomination. Earlier in the day Dixon, Laney and Wright were the leading candidates, but with Laney's withdrawal and Dixon's refusal to accept the nomination despite his great popularity following the keynote address, the conference turned to Thurmond. Thurmond had not planned to attend the conference because he had an engagement to inspect part of the South Carolina National Guard on the morning of July 17. Following a call from Birmingham, however, he decided to fly to the conference in his private plane after the inspection. Hardly had he arrived in Birmingham when he was approached about the nomination. His biographer states that he had "from thirty minutes to an hour to decide whether or not to take it." Before the conference reassembled for the afternoon session, however, it was generally known that

⁶⁰*Birmingham News*, July 17, 1948; *Birmingham Post*, July 17, 1948.

Strom Thurmond and Fielding Wright would be the nominees of the "Dixiecrats."⁶¹

As the convention assembled at 2:30 there were more people present than could fit into the auditorium. Consequently, loudspeakers were installed outside the hall and carried the proceeding beyond the building. Birmingham Police Chief Floyd Eddins estimated the crowd inside and outside Municipal Auditorium during the afternoon session at seventy-five hundred.⁶²

When the session opened Alabama Governor James Folsom gave a short speech in which he charged the Truman administration with "invasion of states' rights." He concluded by urging the "interested people" at the convention to "help bring government close to the people." Horace Wilkinson, Birmingham attorney and Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, presented his committee's report. The statement of principles was received with great cheering, but the crowd went wild when he read a resolution recommending that the states cast their electoral votes for Thurmond and Wright. The ensuing demonstration, at first forced, soon picked up momentum after seventy-nine year old Mrs. Beulah Waller of Byron, Georgia, did a jig on the auditorium stage which brought the crowd to their feet. The demonstration was so loud and long that Chairman Sillers finally had to have the "Star-Spangled Banner" played to restore order. Seconding speeches were given by Senator Eastland and Peter Bradley of Houston, Texas. The essence of their speeches

⁶¹Alberta Lachicotte, *Rebel Senator: Strom Thurmond of South Carolina* (New York, 1966), 42. See also Hobbes, 49-50; *Birmingham News*, July 17, 1948; *Birmingham Post*, July 17, 1948; Lachicotte, 43; *Birmingham News*, July 17, 1948. The name "Dixiecrat" was given to the states' righters in derision by their enemies. Horace Wilkinson had been one of the leaders of the bolt of the Democratic party in Alabama in 1928 against Al Smith. Burns, 96, refers to him as one of "the most intelligent of Alabama's anti-Smith Democrats. . . ." A contemporary opinion expressed by the editor of the *Florence Times*, July 17, 1948, calls Wilkinson "Alabama's leading race-baiter."

⁶²*Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948.

was couched in Bradley's declaration that "Harry Truman has never been elected President and he is not gong to [be]."⁶³

Thurmond and Wright were escorted to the platform at 5:50 p.m. where they gave their acceptance speeches. Neither Wright nor Thurmond claimed victory but promised to show the national party "the real Democratic party is in the South."⁶⁴ Governor Wright spoke first, "an appropriate position since he had done most to 'father' the revolt."⁶⁵ Most of his speech was adulation for the past actions of Southern Democrats. Maintaining that the South had saved the party in the past, he said, "We will not turn back. This is the South's big opportunity to show that we are the real Democratic party. Those who believed we would never be able to carry this fight on to a successful conclusion are beginning to tremble."⁶⁶ He was careful to maintain that the conference was not creating a new party: "This is not a bolt. This is not a fourth party. I say to you that we are the true Democrats of the Southland and these United States." He then introduced Thurmond by saying that he was a "man you will be glad to cast your votes for." "Don't let anybody tell you the South is bolting the Democratic Party. Our people are going to vote for J. Strom Thurmond, a man of integrity—a man in whom you'll be proud to place your trust."⁶⁷

⁶³Hobbes, 51. See also Hobbes, 50-51; *Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948; *Birmingham Post*, July 19, 1948. The *Post* article cited here disagrees with Hobbes as to the length of the demonstrations, asserting that they only lasted five minutes each for Thurmond and Wright.

⁶⁴Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 18, 1948.

⁶⁵Hobbes, 52.

⁶⁶*New York Times*, July 18, 1948.

⁶⁷*Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948. See also *Time*, LII (July 26, 1948), 16; Hobbes, 55: In a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, July 26, 1948, Horace Wilkinson again asserted, "The States' Rights Democrats have never recognized the demand for a return to constitutional government as a sectional issue;" Rushton Papers, Correspondence; Former Governor Frank Dixon reemphasized this point: "The issues are not purely sectional. Fundamentally, they are the ancient issues of a highly centralized police state, as opposed to local self-government. And there are many in other states outside the South who prefer the latter." Frank M. Dixon to Edward S. Hemphill, July 28, 1948, Dixon papers, Correspondence.

Thurmond opened his acceptance by claiming that "No true Southerner could fail to answer the call of his people." A large portion of his speech was a denunciation of the Truman administration:

If the South should vote for Truman this year we might just as well petition the Government to give us colonial status.

President Truman has betrayed the South and we Southerners are going to cast our votes for candidates who are true believers in states' rights principles. For our loyalty to the party we have been stabbed in the back by a President who has betrayed every principle of the Democratic party in his desire to win at any cost.⁶⁸

Thurmond brought the crowd to their feet roaring their approval when he asserted, "Truman has forced himself upon the Democratic Party, but he can't force himself on the people of this country." He then called for continued segregation and warned the conference of the danger of a totalitarian government if the civil rights program was adopted. He said that the Negro had made great progress in the South and would continue to do so, "but I want to tell you, there are not enough laws on the books of the Nation, nor can there be enough laws, to break down segregation in the South."⁶⁹ He concluded:

No longer can they say the South is in the bag, because we're not.

The nation will never forget the fight we are making.

We can go on to victory because right is on our side.

All of Thurmond's speech was met with what the *Birmingham News* referred to as "rafter-rattling" "applause, banging and shouting."⁷⁰

⁶⁸New York *Times*, July 18, 1948. See also Hobbes, 53.

⁶⁹Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 18, 1948. See also *Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948.

⁷⁰*Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948.

After the conclusion of the acceptance speeches the statement of principles was adopted without a dissenting vote. The preamble stated the essence of the platform:

We believe that the protection of the American people against the onward march of totalitarian government requires a faithful observance of Article X of the American Bill of Rights which provides that: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."⁷¹

The chief provisions of the platform declared:

We oppose all efforts to invade or destroy individual rights; we stand for segregation of the races and the racial integrity of each race; the constitutional right to choose one's associates; to accept private employment without government interference We oppose and condemn . . . a civil rights program calling for the elimination of segregation, social equality by federal fiat

We call upon all Democrats . . . and upon all other loyal Americans . . . to unite with us in ignominiously defeating Harry S. Truman and Thomas E. Dewey⁷²

The convention passed a number of resolutions. The delegates voted to invade Missouri and Kentucky, the home states of the national Democratic party candidates, with opposition elector slates. They approved the appointment of a "Southern States Rights Campaign Committee" Chairman. The leaders also agreed to meet again in Atlanta on July 24, to give the organization a definite name and to formulate plans to get the nominees on the ballots in the states. The convention adopted a resolution calling for another meeting of the "Dixiecrats" in Birmingham

⁷¹Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, *National Party Platforms, 1840-1960* (Urbana, 1961), 466-67.

⁷²Birmingham *News*, July 17, 1948. For a complete text of the platform see *ibid.*, July 17, 1948; New York *Times*, July 18, 1948; or Porter and Johnson, 466-68.

on October 1 to "help the States' Righters decide how far plans had gone and what could be expected." As one newspaper observed, "Despite declarations that there will be 'no turning back' to President Truman, the 'states' rights' group did not close the door behind them." A unified conference adjourned at 7:05 p.m. subject to recall by the Chairman after unanimously adopting all of the resolutions.⁷³

Without exception the "delegates" agreed with everything the orators said and were overall rather well behaved. The crowd came nearest to mob hysteria when a lone dissenter stood up during Peter Bradley's seconding speech to protest the manner in which Thurmond and Wright were nominated. The crowd screamed, "throw the Communist Out" and then surrounded him. The objector, Brigadier General Herbert C. Holdridge—a retired army officer and self-styled presidential candidate—soon willingly accepted a police escort away from the screaming mob which soon forgot him in all the excitement. At his room Holdridge later said, "It was Philadelphia all over again. Truman placed himself in nomination in such a fashion. These people protested against the high-handed actions of machine politicians in Philadelphia and they came down here and did the same thing."⁷⁴

Press reaction from over the nation was practically unanimous in its disapproval of the rump convention, although disapproving for different reasons. The *Montgomery Advertiser*

⁷³*Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 1948. See also Hobbes, 58; "History in the Making," 15; *Birmingham Post*, July 19, 1948; *Florida Times-Union*, July 18, 1948. The Atlanta meeting was held and the official name of the "Dixiecrats" became "The States' Rights Democrats." *Birmingham News*, July 24, 1948; July 25, 1948.

⁷⁴*Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948. See also *Birmingham Post*, July 19, 1948. One enthusiastic roter learned a lesson in the value of proper spelling. He carried a sign through the auditorium which the "delegates" thought said "Vote for Truman." Despite his protests he and the sign were roughed up. Later in order to prove to the police that he was not a trouble-maker, he kneeled down on the sidewalk and pieced the sign together. Once reassembled the sign read, "Vote for Thurman." Later Saturday night Truman was hanged in effigy from the balcony railing on the 20th Street side of the Tutwiler Hotel. Across his chest was a sign reading, "Truman killed by civil rights." *Birmingham News*, July 18, 1948. See also July 19, 1948.

asserted, "The leading newspapers of the South are unanimous in deploring the ugly carnival scene."⁷⁵ The Birmingham newspapers all subscribed to the sentiments expressed by the editor of the *Age-Herald*: "The *Age-Herald* is unable to see how this meeting and any action resulting from it can get far in determining the course of the coming national election."⁷⁶ From around the state of Alabama most of the newspapers were in accord. The *Florence Times* and *Tri-Cities Daily* felt that they had been "Sold Down the River" by the "Dixiecrat" leaders—a "group of obsolete, broken-down politicians."⁷⁷ The *Montgomery Advertiser* argued:

The South will get nowhere with the Dixiecrat movement. It is the road to nowhere.

Its leadership is bankrupt

It is entirely negative in its approach. Its inflamed and uninspired leaders did little more than bellow and cry "nigger." That is far short of an answer to the South's grave problem.

The *Advertiser* has no doubt that the South's standing has been greatly damaged by that which boiled out of the nation's radio sets from the Birmingham cauldron

As a result of the Birmingham convention, Senator Claghorn is a less fictional character to the nation than before.⁷⁸

The *Dothan Eagle* which had already declared "We have had enough" felt that nothing was to be gained by voting for the "Dixiecrat" candidates and urged their subscribers to vote Republican.⁷⁹ Strongly stating "we can see no good excuse for the Birmingham rump convention," the *Anniston Star* conceded:

⁷⁵*Montgomery Advertiser*, July 20, 1948.

⁷⁶*Birmingham Age-Herald*, July 17, 1948. See also *Birmingham News*, July 17, 1948.

⁷⁷*Florence Times*, July 17, 1948; *Tri-Cities Daily* (Sheffield, Tuscumbia, Muscle Shoals City), July 17, 1948.

⁷⁸*Montgomery Advertiser*, July 20, 1948.

⁷⁹*Dothan Eagle*, July 15; July 20, 1948.

But possibly we are taking the bolters too seriously. For their get-together was more like a Roman holiday than a convention. It lacked much of being representative of the South as a whole, but at least it did give the irreconcilables a chance to blow off steam and afforded the college boys and girls an opportunity to get out of Summer school and join in the high jinks that characterized the parade.⁸⁰

The nearest most Alabama editors came to expressing a favorable opinion was to admit as did the *Mobile Press* that "the South is making itself heard more effectively than it did prior to and during the national Democratic convention"⁸¹

The reaction was virtually the same in the other states of the South. Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, was one of the harshest critics of the "Dixiecrats" as "he continually questioned the motives of the men behind the movement" He wrote, "I try . . . to speak of what I conceive to be the best interests of the South. I do not think they are being served by the sound and fury of the Birmingham rump meeting of disaffected Democrats." The essence of his argument was "Hell, this ain't a fight to preserve State rights This is a fight to preserve State wrongs."⁸² The *Daily Democrat* in Tallahassee, Florida, editorialized that the sensible thing for the South is to stay in the democratic [sic] party, realizing that it doesn't like and will not accept some of the things the party now stands for."⁸³ Another Florida paper, the *St. Petersburg Times*, called the offspring of the Birmingham meeting "a hair-brained splinter movement"⁸⁴ Farther north the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* wrote that "it is good to know that Virginia took no official part in Yesterday's Claghornesque goings on at Birming-

⁸⁰ *Anniston Star*, July 18, 1948.

⁸¹ *Mobile Press*, July 20, 1948.

⁸² *Collier's*, CXXII (October 9, 1948), 14. See also Emile B. Ader, "Why the Dixiecrats Failed," *The Journal of Politics*, XV (August, 1953), 362; *Atlanta Constitution*, July 19, 1948.

⁸³ *Tallahassee Daily Democrat* Florida, July 18, 1948.

⁸⁴ *St. Petersburg Times*, July 21, 1948.

ham. However much most Southerners resent the treatment the South received at Philadelphia, there is no political nourishment in the Alabama conclave."⁸⁵

Moving outside the South, the press opinion was virtually the same. The New York *Times* denounced the "Dixiecrat" platform and the *Wall Street Journal* called the rump convention a "hasty meeting." *The Times* (London) found little in the conference worth mentioning and said only that "A New Democratic Candidate" was chosen in Birmingham.⁸⁶

The States' Rights Democrats had gone beyond the point of no return. For better or for worse, they had taken a risky plunge with Thurmond and Wright. On the other hand, the two governors were taking an even riskier plunge with the States' Rights cause. For all anyone knew on that hot, steamy afternoon, these two men were taking their first steps toward political suicide. For Strom Thurmond, this date marked the first of many political rebellions that ultimately would characterize his career.⁸⁷

After the convention Thurmond told reporters, "I came over here to say a few words and found myself recommended for President." He said that he "knew that accepting the nomination would have future political repercussions, but I had little time to make up my mind, and I thought somebody ought to do something, so I finally decided to take the plunge. I didn't know then even if my own State would support me."⁸⁸

Thurmond felt the political gamble was worth taking because the "Dixiecrat" aim, according to a number of contemporary commentators, was not the defeat of the civil rights program, although this was the immediate goal. As Senator John J.

⁸⁵Quoted in *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 21, 1948.

⁸⁶New York *Times*, July 19, 1948; *Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 1948; *The Times* (London), July 19, 1948.

⁸⁷Lachicotte, 44.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 43. See also New York *Times*, July 19, 1948.

Sparkman of Alabama (who was not a "Dixiecrat") said, "We must insist that hereafter the South be considered a full partner in the Democratic Party." It seems probable that many "Dixiecrats" would not have rebelled had they thought the national party had any chance of winning. "But now that they . . . [had] a loser to deal with, they . . . [were] ready to put on a show of strength in the struggle for a larger share of party control." As one contemporary observed, "A major realignment of American political parties is the primary objective. The defeat of Truman is secondary." The "Dixiecrats" had no intention of creating a new party.⁸⁰

Despite the emphasis of contemporaries on the overall goal of the states' righters, the "Dixiecrat Movement remains essentially anti-Negro—aimed at preventing the Negro from voting."⁹⁰ As Gladys King Burns wrote, "The issue was, in camouflage form, states' rights; in raw, base form it was white supremacy."⁹¹ Thus, "White supremacy as an issue, was not dead, but it was dying," but still "in the Deep South the great game of politics is played with color."⁹² As the *Washington Post* editorialized: "When the Dixie-crats tried to put on this garment, [states' rights] it just didn't fit. The stark naked limbs of special interest and racial prejudice gawked out of the robe of State sovereignty like the angular appendages of an awkward klansman sticking out of the sheets of the grand kleagle."⁹³

⁸⁰*The Nation*, CLXVII (July 3, 1948), 17-18; *ibid.*, CLXVI (April 3, 1948), 367; *New Republic*, CXIX (November 1, 1948), 10; *ibid.*, CXIX (October 18, 1948), 5.

⁹⁰*Collier's* CXXII (October 9, 1948), 14. It is to Thurmond's credit that he stayed aloof of his "white supremacist" followers. William J. Keefe, "Southern Politics Revisited," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, XX (Summer, 1956), 407. Thurmond said, "We are not running on white supremacy, racial hatred or class prejudice. We are running primarily on the issue of states' rights." *Birmingham News*, July 25, 1948.

⁹¹Burns, 2.

⁹²Keefe, 412. See also Ader, 369.

⁹³*Washington Post*, July 18, 1948.

It should be admitted that the "Dixiecrat" movement functioned at two levels and that at both there were a number of important issues operating separately and together. The first level was the leadership, the men who organized the movement, while the second was the voting public who responded. In brief, there existed the candidates and the voters, and it is undoubtedly true that both levels were motivated by resentment at a growing central government, anger at being ignored at the national level, and estrangement from the general philosophy of the Democratic party. Yet it seems likely that the most basic explanation for the revolt, and the one factor that bound the dissidents together was the race issue. Some were at a point of hysteria and saw the immediate and total destruction of Anglo-Saxon culture if Truman were elected. Others viewed his election as the beginning of a process that would in time mean social and economic equality between the races. Because the threat existed, they attempted to stop it, and the form of their revolt was the abortive "Dixiecrat" revolt.

Thus the "Dixiecrat" convention was over but it was perhaps the beginning of a New South: a South which could not be taken for granted as was to be shown in the Eisenhower years and again in 1964 and 1968. The States' Rights Democrats, perhaps unwittingly, seem to be the forebears of a mid-twentieth century phenomenon: the creation of a genuine two-party South which would have a greater voice in national political circles because of the uncertainty of their party affiliation in any given election. The "Dixiecrats" thus began the South on its way back into the two-party union of their ancestors by uprooting Democratic tradition. An honest evaluation of the States' Rights Democrats would have to class their efforts as one of the colossal failures of American political history and at the same time one of the lasting, though unintended, successes in the development of the American political system. As the editor of the *Washington Post* concluded, "Insofar as the . . . movement reflects a realignment of political forces in the South . . . it gives hope of breaking down the political stagnation of that section."⁹⁴

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, July 19, 1948.

THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF ROBERT TARLETON

edited by

William N. Still, Jr.

Robert Tarleton was born in Talladega County, Alabama on June 20, 1838. In 1854 he entered Princeton College, Princeton, New Jersey, and graduated in 1859, after ill-health had extended his undergraduate career. He then studied medicine in New York City until the outbreak of the Civil War when he returned to Alabama and enlisted as a private in the Confederate army. He was stationed for a brief period in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1861, and then was transferred to Columbus, Kentucky. Later in his military career he served as a clerk on the staff of General Braxton Bragg. In 1863 he received a commission as a lieutenant in the artillery and at his request was transferred to Fort Morgan on Mobile Bay. Tarleton remained stationed there until the fort capitulated in August, 1864. He surrendered with the rest of the garrison and was transported to a prisoner-of-war camp in New Orleans. His confinement was brief, however, for in October, 1864, he escaped. Returning to Mobile, he rejoined the Confederate forces and remained in the city until the end of the war.

After the war Tarleton tried farming on a cotton plantation in Louisiana, but two and a half years later he returned to Mobile. On September 28, 1868, Robert Tarleton, age thirty, died after a brief illness. Tarleton was married to Sallie B. Lightfoot of Pass Christian, Mississippi, and had three children. The last one was born the day after he died.

Sometime between August 27, 1862 and February 18, 1864, Tarleton met and apparently fell in love with Sallie Lightfoot. From the latter date until the end of the war he wrote her regularly, usually every three or four days. Nearly all of the letters were written while he was stationed at Fort Morgan. The published excerpts are from approximately one-third of the preserved letters. They are published by the kind permission of Mrs. Frank Ladd DuValle of Mobile, Alabama.

Fort Morgan
February 22, 1864

Dear Miss Sallie:

Once more at the Fort, and each old familiar brick, wall, and bastion—each picturesque sand hill and stunted pine greets me as a friend. Indeed I believe I feel a great deal more at home here than in Mobile and were it not for the counter-attraction in Green now I would be perfectly contented with its dull and unexciting life. When I first came down here I remember wondering if any mortal man could ever become fond of such a place and for the first ten weeks my opinion was decidedly in the negative, but at the end of that time I was astonished to find myself in a very healthy and cheerful frame of mind, reasoning complacently that after all perhaps this was better than cold rain, hunger, marching and contermarching, bullets and sundry other pleasant little things connected with the field—and the grand conclusion of it all was that Fort Morgan¹ was a very pleasant place and I would remain here very happily till the end of the war. . . .

The enemy have not fired at Fort Powell² since the 16th, the day you left. The only persons injured there were a Lieut. Cogburn and Serg. Stanard, both slightly wounded. The damage to the Fort was very trifling. The officers' quarters, however, were entirely destroyed. No less than five shells bursting in them. Why the enemy have not renewed the attack it is impossible to say—they are still in the sound and in increased force—and the weather for the last three days has been superb. No Iron-clads have yet appeared either in the sound or outside

¹Fort Morgan was a pentagonal bastioned work of brick with forty-five guns located on a long tongue of land extending out from the mainland on the eastern side of Mobile Bay. On the eastern extremity of Dauphin Island about three miles across the channel from Fort Morgan was Fort Gaines with an armament of twenty-six guns.

²Fort Powell, with six or seven guns, was located on Shell Island between Dauphin Island and the mainland. Admiral David Farragut, commanding Union naval forces in the Gulf, ordered a bombardment of the fort on February 13, 1864. For three days four gunboats and six mortar boats shelled the fort.

and they may be waiting for them, as I don't think it possible for them to reduce Fort Powell by a bombardment alone.

There are ten blockaders off the harbor—about the usual number, and I think Farragut must be on board of one of them—for a gunboat came from the Sound this morning and went up to the fleet, with a flag at her peak, which the pilots here said was an Admiral's flag. If this is so, serious work is intended against Fort Powell. What I fear now is that this attack will continue during the remainder of the war for at its present force it can never lead to anything decisive and indeed, unless reinforced with a land army can never seriously endanger Mobile. But I tell you what it can do, and that as effectually as if there were a hundred thousand men in it, and that is, it may prevent my ever getting a furlough to visit you. At present they are not even granting two days' leave to visit Mobile and in truth it is impossible to say what a day may bring forth.

I shall wait as patiently as possible for some time longer and then if there are no signs of an attack on this fort I shall write an application to Gen'l Maury³ and enclose in it a note to Gen'l. Butler with the request that he will present it to Gen'l M. if in his (Gen'l. B's) opinion it would be consistent with my honor as an officer and a gentleman to accept a furlough at the time. Gen'l B. very kindly offered when I saw him last Thursday, of which I wrote you, to do anything he could for me and said he would expect me to call on him without hesitation. If then it should be granted I think I may accept it without any compunctious visitings of conscience. So I will keep myself afloat with that hope as long as possible.

Fort Morgan

February 25th, 1864

Dear Miss Sallie:

For the first time since we parted my head feels like a head and not like a gong under the manipulations of an enraged chinaman. My heart feels much lighter too. The retreat of

Sherman⁴ is confirmed and I can think once more that you are in safety. It really looks as if the storm which frightened you away from Mobile were about to pass away in idle thunder without doing us any harm after all. At any rate there was no immediate danger and you might have remained months longer. I do sincerely hope your father was not very anxious about you.

But although Sherman's movement was a feint or at any rate has terminated like one, I do not think the attack on Fort Powell will prove of the same character. The Yankees seem to be in dead earnest. When I last wrote you—I believe on the 22nd—they had been quiet for several days, but on the morning of the 23rd they reopened and have since kept up a heavy and continuous fire from morning to evening upon the Fort, from mortar and gun boats. The injury to the Fort has been very slight and no one has been killed and I have not heard of any wounded. The latest news today is that they, the Yankees, have landed on Dauphin Island. I can't imagine what they are going to do there, but it does not seem possible that our generals will let them remain.

Gen'ls. Maury and Gilmore⁵—the new Genl. from Charleston, you remember—visited us yesterday and also Fort Powell after dark. I think they were taking a "last long lingering look" at us before consigning us finally to the tender mercies of our friends outside. The Admiral⁶ was along and he gave us

³Major General Dabney H. Maury, C. S. Army, commanding Confederate military forces in Mobile.

⁴Early in February, 1864, Major General William T. Sherman, under orders from General U. S. Grant, captured Meridian, Mississippi, a rail center. He planned to threaten and possibly seize Mobile but his cavalry was defeated by a Confederate cavalry force under Bedford Forrest, and Sherman retired to Vicksburg.

⁵Probably Major General Jeremy Gilmer, who was ordered by President Jefferson Davis to inspect the Mobile defenses.

⁶Rear Admiral Franklin Buchanan in command of Confederate naval forces in Mobile Bay.

the pleasing intelligence that the *Tennessee*⁷ was aground in the Mobile river and that he left six steamboats tugging at her in the vain attempt to move her and furthermore that it was his opinion she never could be gotten down the bay. This was charming to us, but became much more so when he told us, as he did immediately afterwards, that he had received a letter from the President and one from the Secretary of the Navy informing him that Com. Farragut was certainly preparing to run by the Fort and get into the lower bay. If this happens— . . . goob-bye to you for a time at least—sweet lady of my dreams.

Mobile

March 2, 1864

Dear Miss Sallie:

. . . . Do not regard the attack on Fort Powell. It is nothing and can never endanger the safety of the city. Only think, day before yesterday the enemy fired 567 shots—of which only 20 struck the island and 3, the bomb-proof, killing or wounding no one and damaging the Fort so slightly that ten men in ten minutes restored it to its former condition. How long such an attack will last you may imagine. Do not persuade yourself that duty requires you to remain at home now. Should a serious attack be threatened here there will always be timely notice of it. Mrs. Maury is still in the city and I venture to predict will not leave at all. . . . The panic has entirely subsided and everyone laughs at the idea of the city's being in danger.

. . . . Tuesday—I made a brilliant but unsuccessful attempt to return to the Fort. The boat left at ten o'clock and I had the honor of conveying Genls. Maury, Gilmer and Rains⁸ and Col.

⁷Ironclad built at Selma, Alabama, and towed to Mobile for completion. Commissioned on February 16, 1864, she was slightly over two hundred feet in overall length with a rather broad beam of forty-eight feet. She had a battery of six guns and a ram.

⁸Colonel George W. Rains in charge of gunpowder production in the Confederacy.

Ives,⁹ aid to the President. With Gen'l M. you are acquainted and he therefore needs no description. On this occasion he was gotten up "perfectly regardless." He wore a short blue roundabout "all buttoned down before" and little bell crowned hat and in fact in the way of costume was a perfect panorama, but his frank smile and high cheery voice audible all over the boat made amends for all deficiencies of dress. Gen'l. Gilmer is a tall sallow dignified man with the exception of his erect military carriage has more of the air of a student than a soldier.

Gen'l Rains, however, was a most comical looking person. You would have enjoyed him. He is, I suppose, fifty, of medium height, with a short, quick, jerky way of walking, and a most peculiar expression of face, the eyes and mouth of which are incessantly in motion. Like Uncle Ned he has very little "hair on the top of his head in the place where hair ought to grow". He is a great torpedo man, you remember, is a perfect monomaniac on the subject—talks of nothing else. I saw him get one innocent and confiding young man in a corner and I am certain he torpedoed him for at least two hours.

Col. Ives was rather an aristocratic looking man with not much of the air of a soldier. This distinguished party were going down to visit Cedar Point and Dauphin Island. At the former place we put them out in a small boat and then steered away for Fort Morgan. We passed through our fleet which was at anchor in line at the rear of Fort Powell. The admiral was on board the *Gaines*¹⁰ and on the quarter deck of the *Morgan*¹¹ I caught the "golden gleam" of two pairs of "celestial

⁹Colonel Joseph C. Ives, aide-de-camp to President Davis.

¹⁰CSS *Gaines* constructed by the Confederates at Mobile during 1861-62. She was 202' long with a beam of 38' and carried an armament of 6 guns. She fought gallantly during the battle of Mobile Bay in August, 1864 until finally run aground by her own officers to avoid surrender to the Union forces.

¹¹*Morgan* was the sister ship to the *Gaines*. She was also built in Mobile and participated in the Battle of Mobile Bay. She was the only Confederate vessel to escape and continued in service until surrendered to Union forces in May, 1865.

rosy red'' whiskers on the familiar countenances of Mr. Harrison¹² and Dr. Edmonds.¹³

The Yankee fleet was lying about four miles up the Sound—huddled up together, apparently repairing the damages of the previous day's fight. When we got within half a mile of the Fort it became apparent that we could not land on account of the sea which was running very high and so we put about and returned to the city. At any other time I should have been very well pleased but on this occasion I was not for I knew and know there was a letter from you on board that boat for me. However, back to town we came and what do you think I have done today—read Tennyson and Owen Meredith and written the letter to your mother which I enclose and which I hope will please you and her. Tonight, as you have found out long before this, I have been writing to you.

Navy Cove
March 18th, 1864

Dear Miss Sallie:

. . . . As you see by the date I am not at the Fort this week but at Navy Cove, a flourishing sea-port, beautifully situated about five miles from it on the bay shore. It is a picket station and I have the honor of being in command of the Confederate forces in this quarter. These consist of a Sergeant, a corporal and thirteen men, a horse and two or three dogs.

We came up on Monday—and remain a week and are then relieved. We are the advance guard of the Fort and at the same time serve as an "army of occupation" for this goodly city which is the most important place in this vicinity. Indeed it is thought in intelligent circles here that this was the objective point and not Selma, of Sherman's late campaign, and that his idea was to destroy the horse rail-road between here and the

¹²Commander George W. Harrison, CSN, commanded the *Morgan*.

¹³Probably Dr. Nicholas C. Edmunds, assistant surgeon on the *Morgan*.

Fort—to put a violent end to the oyster trade with Mobile and to wage a vigorous offensive war against the great . . . state of Baldwin. I am convinced that this, had it been successfully accomplished, would have brought the Confederate cause to the verge of ruin. Europe never would have recognized us as long as New Orleans and Navy Cove remained in Yankee possession. So you see the importance and responsibility of my position and the necessity for vigilance. I am seriously afraid, however, that my force is inadequate and that in case of a strong attack I shall have to follow the Fabian policy of Genl. Polk¹⁴ and “skedaddle”. However, judging from the past, that will only give the Richmond authorities, whose nod is the soldier’s fortune, a higher opinion of my strategic abilities. But as I prefer Leonidas (the Greek and not the bishop) and Pemberton¹⁵ to Y’atius(,) and Polk I propose, should occasion offer between now and next Monday to make a grand historic fight here—something in the Thermopylae line that shall throw Vicksburg and Tunnel Hill completely in the shade.

The city itself is well worth fighting for. It is simply a long straggling row of dilapidated one-story houses, paintless and shapeless, built immediately on the shore—the sandy beach serving as the main street and promenade of the village, and being adorned with various canoes and skiffs, hauled up on shore for safety. The shore makes a beautiful curve here which ends in “little Point Clear” and together with a long bar running in front of the place, forms a secure harbor, sheltered in every direction from the winds and waves, where the boats of the inhabitants ride quietly at anchor in all kinds of weather.

Of these inhabitants you never could get any idea from any description. They are peculiar, morally and physically. The men, like all men who have followed a sea-faring life are hardy, robust, industrious and intelligent. Before the war they were almost all pilots and since the war, those of them who remain,

¹⁴Major General Leonidas Polk, CSA, called the Bishop General because he was a Bishop in the Episcopal Church before the war.

¹⁵Probably General John C. Pemberton who surrendered Vicksburg to General Grant in July, 1863.

all the young men being either in the army or navy, have degenerated into a race—half hunter and half oysterman, now and then exercising their old calling of pilot, by taking out some blockade runner—for which they are frequently rewarded by a trip to Fort Warren or some other Yankee prison, returning thence after various intervals with terrible experiences with which to delight the gossips of the “loveliest village of the plain”.

When I came up last Monday I brought up a formidable supply of writing materials intending to inflict at least two letters on you during the week—but alas for human resolutions—I have been compelled to forego that amiable intention by a series of circumstances over which I had no control. In the first place the weather changed suddenly on Monday—the wind blowing “great guns” from the north, rendering it impossible to write at night, on account of the cold which has been like mid-winter, and the impracticability of keeping the light burning. In the second, I was politely but pressingly invited by my friend Major Gee to spend each day with him in the administration of broken doses of justice to various offenders against the majesty of the law who were to appear before the Court Martial of which I told you in my last. My presence being absolutely necessary to constitute a quorum, rendered so by the absence of several members of the court, who had been summoned to town as witnesses. . . .

Fort Morgan
May 18, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . we are expecting a grand sensation in a few days. The *Tennessee* is in sight about ten miles up the bay and they have only to take the camels¹⁸ from under her when she will be ready to go out and raise the blockade. The unsuspecting Yanks are

¹⁸Camels were wooden caissons filled with water, lowered and lashed to the bottom of a ship in order to raise her. Camels were used to lift the ironclad over a bar into Mobile Bay.

quietly at anchor outside little dreaming of the entertainment preparing for them, and as the clown used to say, "the first thing they know they won't know nothing."

It is getting too hot to walk, except in the morning and about sundown and at those hours we have to drill.

Good night.

Fort Morgan
May 20th, 1864

My Dear "best friend":

. . . . We have been having the most beautiful weather, cloudless breezy days and moonlight nights. Last night was the loveliest I ever saw. I was on "Beach Guard" as it is called here, a sort of an inner picket, about a mile from the Fort on the South beach and was awake the greater part of the night. A Yankee gunboat was lying close in and I walked down to the water's edge and took a seat on a friendly log to observe her motions. Never was there a more lovely or peaceful scene. "The moon was up and a thousand stars" sprinkling the waves with silver spangles and flooding the desert sandy shore with a fairy light. It was a scene where a man might forget about wars and excitements and "be still". The sea was almost calm, the surface only broken by slight ripples which dashed gently and soothingly on the sand. No foam, no noise like "the rush of many waters". I fancied the dashing sounded like the low prolonged, measured "hush" of a mother to a restless child.

I should also have been particularly happy, knowing your tastes, to have had you take breakfast with me this morning. Scene—outside the fort in a large room in one of those long, long buildings you perhaps remember. In the center of the room stands a fine table with plates, linens, forks, and chairs arranged as if for a feast. In the center of the table salt cellar, flanked on the right by one black bottle containing catchup and on the left by another variegated bottle, like Joseph's coat of many colors containing pepper vinegar.

Enter, with a rush, five or six young men in a high state of hunger and excitement, joyous expectation of each countenance, and unbuckling swords and hanging hats up on the floor or any other convenient place, seat themselves in the above-mentioned chairs, seize the ditto knives and forks, rap furiously on the ditto table, and call loudly for an invisible and hypothetical individual, named "Major", adding a mild suggestion to "bring in breakfast", "trot out your commissaries", or words to that effect. A low guttural grumbling is heard, followed by a rattling of pots and pans, when enter from adjoining room two Ethiopians, the first and taller bearing a plate upon which repose two loaves of corn bread of the species, called by the learned, gridole cakes, the second and smaller bringing nothing but smiling audibly. First Ethiopian deposits plate upon which reposes cakes on table, second ditto composes countenance and glances expectantly into the faces of the aforesaid five or six young men to turn hungry and inquiring eyes towards the door of the adjoining room. Tall Ethiopian who fills the position of Chief Commissary and cook-master general, stands in the "position of a soldier with out arms" fixing his eyes on vacancy and utterly ignoring the fond hopes his extraordinary behavior is slowly but surely crushing in the hearts or rather stomachs of the aforesaid young men. An ominous pause ensues, a shadow falls on the smiling faces, and the conviction steals into every mind that old Marion and his sweet potatoes was a humbug. We soon rallied, however, and attacked the griddle cakes, which soon disappeared under our united efforts. You see we draw ten days rations at a time and turn them over to the tall Ethiopian and the consequence is before the ten days are over everything is demolished except corn meal.

. . . . The *Tennessee* is expected to go out on the night of the 21st.

Fort Morgan
May 27th, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . . Within the last week we have been on the threshold of great events in this department. I wrote you that the *Tennessee*

had passed the bar and was in sight of the fort some time since. Of course her appearance gave rise to all sorts of reports about intended attacks on the blockaders and every night that appeared at all favorable it was hoped and believed would witness the sinking or dispersion of the Yankee fleet. The undertaking looked like a desperate one. The Yanks must have been informed of our movements for they had reinforced their fleet largely. It consisted of ten or twelve vessels of which six were large sloops of war, carrying the heaviest batteries. Last Monday night our fleet—the *Tenn.*, *Baltic*,¹⁷ *Gaines Selma*¹⁸ and *Morgan* had orders to go out and make the attack and steam was actually gotten up for the purpose, when upon attempting to move her the *Tennessee* was found to be aground and did not get off until Tuesday morning when the tide rose and floated her. The little squadron then steamed slowly down the bay, disdaining longer concealment and heading for the channel as if going out. The Yanks were in line of battle outside the bar and a mile nearer the fort than their usual anchorage and not seeming at all intimidated. The contrast between the two fleets was almost ridiculous. Nevertheless we landmen prepared ourselves to see a grand fight but our fleet, on getting almost opposite the fort came to an anchor in the most harmless and pacific way. It seems the admiral did not like the looks of the fleet outside. It is said that he sent a dispatch to Richmond stating the strength of the two squadrons and his willingness to make the attack and asking for orders. So there the affair rests and I don't expect to see the fight soon. Everyone thinks the admiral acted most prudently. I don't think the younger portion of the gunboats fancied the expedition much. Mr. Rainey commands all the broadside guns in the *Tenn.*

¹⁷The CSS *Baltic* was a sidewheel ironclad built by the state of Alabama and turned over to the Confederate government for the defense of Mobile Bay. Although her armor was later transferred to another ironclad, she continued to operate with the Mobile squadron until it was surrendered to Union forces in May, 1865.

¹⁸CSS *Selma* originally named the *Florida* was converted from a coastwise packet into a gunboat. Armed with four guns she participated in the Battle of Mobile Bay and surrendered to Union naval forces during the engagement.

Fort Morgan

June 5, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . . Since my last we have been having something of an excitement in the shape of a little misunderstanding with our Yankee friends about an English steamer the *Ivanhoe*, which ran aground last Thursday night in attempting to run the blockade. She lies about a mile east of the Fort within a few yards of shore, hard and fast aground. The guns of the enemy awakened us from our peaceful slumbers Thursday night about midnight to the great disgust of your humble servant while the harsh "rolling" of the "alarming drum" suggested the idea that possibly General Page's¹⁹ idea was about to be realized by a night attack, or attempt to run by us without stopping to pay the salutes which international etiquette requires. In less time than it takes to write it we were at our respective batteries in a high state of rage and patriotism, eager to pour our "volleyed thunder" on the "vandal foe" (quoted from late newspaper). In this amiable wish, however, we were disappointed. The "vandal foe" ceased firing and after an hour of impatient waiting during which hour many a bloodthirsty mosquito was sent to that "country from whose bourne" no mosquito was ever known to return, we were dismissed to our quarters.

Scarcely had sleep, however, wrapped me in its blanket as the courtly squire and pride of chivalry Sancho Panza expresses it, than I received a summons from Major Gee to arise and gird on my sword and go forth with my company to defend a stranded vessel from the attempts of the "ruthless invader" (quotation No. 2). A march of half an hour brought us to the vessel, a light beautiful steamer just over from England in her first trip and loaded, it was said, with government stores. One company has already reached her and was engaged in boating her cargo ashore, while my patriots addressed themselves to the arduous

¹⁹General Richard L. Page was the commanding officer of Fort Morgan from the fall of 1863 until the fort surrendered. Before this he was an officer in the Confederate States Navy.

duty of moving it from the shore over the sand hills, a few hundred yards off, to be protected from the fire which the enemy was certain to open as soon as daylight enabled them to discover the vessel and our occupation. The scene reminded me of what I had read as a boy of ship wrecks on the Coast of Sahara. Sure enough as soon as it was light the Yankee gunboats bore down towards us and after an hour or two spent apparently in making observations, opened fire. Five gunboats, a sloop of war, and a small craft of no particular class or description, steamed up and arranging themselves in a semi-circular line of battle, at a distance of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Fort and $2\frac{1}{2}$ from the *Ivanhoe* participated, pouring a hot fire of shot and shell, heavy and light, round and cylindrical. They kept this up with various degrees of rapidity all the morning, the Fort replying very slowly. The companies had in the meantime been ordered to the Fort, leaving only a guard over the stores which had been landed. I remained with the guard til breakfast time and then returned, my walk being diversified by falling shot and bursting shell.

Friday night I had the pleasure of sleeping in quarters. Saturday, which was yesterday, we were firing at the fleet at intervals all day and they at us, and last night I again had the pleasure of going to the assistance of the *Ivanhoe*. The night passed off very much like that of Thursday except that about two hours before day the gunboats slipped in very near her and suddenly opened fire, the shot flying pretty thick for a little while. Nobody was hurt and the only thing I have to regret about the affair was that some of my men behaved badly and I shall have to prefer charges against them. . . .

Fort Morgan

June 17th, 1864

Dear Miss Sallie:

You cannot imagine a more disagreeable life than I have been leading since we parted. To be sick anywhere is bad enough to one of as impatient a disposition as myself, but to be sick at

Fort Morgan without a single thing to make confinement tolerable, except the release from the senseless round of drilling, etc. which go to make up the "pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war" as seen in this garrison, is enough to make one think of Job with contempt. I am happy, however, to be able to report myself "fit for duty" once more. One advantage about the place was that there was no temptation to break the doctor's injunction not to eat anything—or so little that one cannot take credit to himself for obeying it. I find another cause of congratulation in the fact that half the time of my sickness, my mess has been on the point of starvation, or rather reduced too the salubrious diet of "corn bread straight". Under such circumstances blessed is the man who eats nothing. The difficulties we have to encounter in getting a quantum sufficit of "daily bread" are many and ludicrous in the extreme, and almost all proceeding from our own laziness which makes us "rather bear the ills we have" than take the trouble to correct them. . .

Navy Cove

June 26th, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

I believe I told you in my last of my being on picket which will account for the date of this letter. . . . Picket life is as monotonous as anything you can imagine, a sort of Castle of Indolence style of existence, in which the grand desire (?) is to kill time, mosquitoes, and sand flies and keep cool. However, it is a change, a different kind of monotony from that of the Fort and therefore agreeable. The peninsula is about a half mile wide here and about the middle of it is situated the headquarters of this Department, pleasantly surrounded by ponds and marshes, the home and hiding places of countless insects of various and ruthless dispositions, and concealed from the view of the Yankee fleet outside by sand hills and thick woods. It has a charming exposure to the sun as they will find to their cost, who attempt to spend a day there. I generally abandon the position about sunrise and return at sunset, turning over the command to the Sergeant of the guard, with instructions to hold it to the last ex-

tremity if it should be attacked during my absence. A bath in the surf at sunrise, an early breakfast, a ride down to the Fort to get the papers and possibly a letter from yourself, then a ride back in the hot sun, dinner and a long afternoon which seems as if it would never pass, spent in lounging about in the shade with an occasional doze when the mosquitoes permit, brings me to a cool breezy evening, when another swim, supper and the "day is done." . . .

Fort Morgan
July 7, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . . I wrote you of the steamer *Ivanhoe* and the controversy going on about her between ourselves and the Yanks, which so far may be said to be in favor of the latter. There has been no artillery firing since the 4th. Up to that day it was going on every day and occasionally at night. On the afternoon of the 4th four large vessels and several gun boats came up in three miles of the fort and opened fire dividing their attentions at first about equally between it and the *Ivanhoe*, but towards the last devoting the most of it to our entertainment. For an hour or two shot and shell were shrieking and bursting about our heads at a very lively rate, causing some very quick dodging. "Wall flowers" were in the majority decidedly. Many amusing scenes occurred. The fort fired only a few shots in reply. "Nobody hurt" although two shells fell in the citadel and several struck different parts of the works.

Night before last I was detailed to command a detachment of thirty men and ordered to guard the *Ivanhoe* as it was expected the enemy would attempt to burn her. Before leaving the post I saw Col. Jackson the post commander and received from him instructions not to board the vessel or not to let anyone else board her — a most absurd order as the sequel will prove and as I then thought.

I was delayed about an hour before starting and again went to see him and asked him if I could board the vessel and

he replied that I was not to do so but was to protect her as well as I could on shore. A very difficult thing to do as my men were armed with rifles and muskets only. I reached the shore opposite the *Ivanhoe* about 9 o'clock and posted sentinels in the places best suited to give them a view of anything approaching the vessel. She was lying aground about forty or fifty yards from the shore and parallel to it. The night was dark and though starlight overhead and in the north, the southern sky was hidden by masses of black clouds, through which the lighting burst at intervals, blinding us for an instant and leaving everything blacker than before. About ten or eleven o'clock three gunboats were discovered approaching slowly from the eastward.²⁰ They came on very cautiously, until within a half or quarter of a mile of us and then remained motionless. Expecting a load of grape or canister from them I moved my detachment a little to the left into a slight hollow and sat down on the water's edge to watch them. About twelve or one o'clock the corporal of the guard came running to me saying the launches were at her and immediately on his footsteps followed one of the sentinels reporting that he had heard men jumping on the deck. I ran my detachment down opposite her and as soon as the sounds on board satisfied me that men were really on board of her ordered firing to commence, directing the men to sweep the decks. Almost simultaneously with this order brilliant flames shot up from the door and windows of the cabin aft, and from the forecastle and spread with great rapidity, evidently fed by some very combustible liquid. Then followed sounds of men running hurriedly and jumping into the boats.

I continued firing until the distant shouting told me that the launches were at a safe distance, my fire being replied to by large guns from one of the gunboats and small arms from the launches. The affair was very neatly managed by the enemy although they were favored by the darkness, by the fact that there were no men on board and by the negligence of my sentinels. For the last there was much excuse in the darkness of the night,

²⁰For the destruction of the *Ivanhoe* see the report of Captain Percival Drayton to Admiral Farragut, July 6, 1864, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, Series I, XXI, 355-356.

and the position of the vessel, which was such that it would conceal any boat approaching from the view of our shore almost as soon as the darkness of the night would permit them to be seen, — so that between the two a sentinel had to be very vigilant to discover anything approaching from the sea. The order not to go on board was the cause of our bad luck. If I had been on board with thirty men I have no hesitation in saying the vessel could have been defended. About a half hour before day I sent on board to see what progress the flames had made and found the bow and stern partially consumed but the middle untouched. As I had no buckets or anything of the sort I could do nothing towards staying the flames. A keg of powder was found with a fuse in it which the Yanks had failed to light. Of course, the officer in charge will be blamed for the affair and it is only natural that he should, by those ignorant of the facts, but it is the opinion of every officer who has seen the vessel that she could not have been defended by men on shore. . . .

Fort Morgan

July 10, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

Tomorrow is my day for writing but as it is more than probable that I will be on duty tonight, and consequently not in an epistolary mood at that time, I avail myself of an hour's leisure this morning to inform you that I am not feeling very well and hope these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing. We are having a good deal of work now of the most harassing nature. The *Ivanhoe* is still on our hands and a great bore she has been. What with unloading and guarding her, moving her cargo, and now getting out her machinery, we are all most heartily sick of her and sincerely wish some Yankee shell had sent her to the bottom ere she had reached these Confederate shores. The Yanks have made only one attempt to board her since the night they partially burned her, of which I wrote you in my last, but owing to the fact that we had men on board they were easily repulsed. Since then they have been shy of her.

But last night, as if one at a time were not enough, another beautiful steamer, a little larger than the *Ivanhoe*, got aground in the Swash Channel just in front of the old hospital, the large building you may perhaps remember, just to the left of the Fort. She is a beauty, of wonderful speed, and passed the cordon of Yankee gunboats last night without attracting a shot, but owing to the fact of her being overloaded, grounded in the middle of the channel in the position described, which is immediately under the guns of the Fort. Genl. Page with his usual good ? judgment turned the whole garrison out at the first alarm, although already worked to death, and kept them on the walls from one o'clock 'til day, though what possible good they could do there no one can imagine, while as if to verify my theory that a man never learns anything by experience, he refused to allow a company to go on board of her to protect her from a boat attack, the danger to be most apprehended; replying to Major Gee, who urged him to do it, that sharp-shooters on shore could drive launches away from her.

You must know that she lies about 250 yards away from the water's edge, about as far as one could see a boat such a night as last night was. I respectfully submit that a man who would express and act in so important a matter upon such an opinion, after the burning of the *Ivanhoe*, which you remember was in forty or fifty yards of the shore, whatever his qualifications for naval or military command may be, *must* be deficient in the upper story. I am certain that our venerable general is not in a position, should opportunity offer, to add to his reputation. He is beginning to find out he is not on board the "ship of war Gumination (?)" and I don't think his head has yet recovered from the confusion into which great and unexpected discoveries are apt to throw people. Like poor slip-shod Mrs. Wragg's "its buzzing, buzzing". Though not gifted with second sight I feel something like a "prophetic fury", seize my pen and venture to predict that if we are ever attacked, or the fleet attempts to run by, or the enemy make a landing anywhere in his brigade, the confusion and upheaving of his intellectual faculties, the mental excitement caused by the sudden rushing in of new and the violent skedaddling of old ideas struggling in "acticulo mortis" will be terrible in its effects — something like the popping of champ-

agne corks or any other sublime affair your imagination may suggest.

At daylight this morning the Yankees discovered the last steamer whose name I have forgotten to tell you, it is the *Virgin*, and after about two hours delay opened fire on her, since which time they have fired about 100 shot and shell. When I commenced writing the explosions were quite regular, but now they have almost ceased. Before I left the walls they had made some very pretty shots but had not struck her. It is thought she will float at high tide.

I must tell you a remark made by a young lady, a visitor of a Mrs. Williamson, the wife of the adjutant of the post. She said she did not mind the Yankee's firing in the daytime but it did *mortify* her very much to hear it at night. The ladies of the Fort have had a terrible time for the last ten days, you may imagine, but I must tell you about it in my next. . . .

Fort Morgan
July 12th, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . . I wrote you of the mishap of the steamer *Virgin* and of our being called to the guns and kept there until day by our considerate general. The day of the 11th passed quietly, varied only by the attempts of the Yanks to destroy the *Virgin* with shells, in which they met with no success although some shots struck very close to her. I don't think the Fort fired a shot, as from some cause or other they (the Yanks) kept at a very respectful distance.

In the afternoon, I and a friend, Lieut. Smith, who is a much more uncommon fellow than his name, concluded to take a ride, if it was possible to persuade our friend, the Quartermaster, to furnish the horses. Successful in this we sallied forth, mounted on Confederate thoroughbreds and directed our course towards the South Beach, which we proposed to scout for several

miles to the eastward in the hope of finding some of the foreign plunder, vast stores of which report said had been "cast upon the waters" from the *Virgin* when she ran aground. We were slightly disappointed in this, and after quite a long ride, . . . we turned our horses' heads towards Navy Cove and paid our respects to an old nautical and piscatorial friend under whose roof we shrewdly suspected were concealed numbers of that interesting vegetable yclept watermelon. We were not deceived, and soon you might have beheld us, had you been in seeing distance, each seated in front of a goodly melon, pictures of serene enjoyment. In this fascinating employment we lingered 'till after dark and then rode home, taking the way of the South Beach.

About half way between Navy Cove and the Fort a new battery has recently been constructed and near it the picket line of sentinels established. Through this picket line, of course, we would have to pass. The night was quite dark, the sky covered with black, dense shifting clouds, through which vivid flashes of lightning burst every now and then — just such a night as a tragic novelist would choose for something terrible to happen in. We were riding slowly along the beach speculating on the probability of getting a ducking before we got home and wondering whether we had passed the sentinels or not. Smith said we had, I said we had not, and we had just convinced ourselves, each of his own opinion, when we heard a shot, a sharp report, the unmistakeable singing of a Minnie ball and the dull striking of the same at our feet, to the great alarm and confusion of our horses, settled the discussion more quickly than agreeably. We shouted "friends" and urged our thoroughbreds into the fastest gallop possible to get out of the uncivil fellow's way before he could reload. I presume the sentinel challenged and we did not hear him and so he fired. We had not passed him a quarter of a mile before we met the threatened shower and in less than two minutes were as wet as if we had been thrown into the sea. The way it rained would have made old grandfather Noah open his venerable eyes. We reached the Fort in wretched plight, cheering ourselves with the fond hope that there our troubles would end for the night.

But alas, new troubles and new duckings were before us.

We were met on the threshold, or to speak literally at the sally-port, with the intelligence that our two companies had been ordered on board of the *Virgin* to protect her from the fate of the *Ivanhoe*. Two minutes were sufficient to behold us arrayed in dry clothes and ready for the fray. My company was ready, but Capt. Campbell being missing, was without a commander. As soon therefore as one appeared in the person of your humble servant, the command to "fall in" was given.

It was at this moment your letter was handed me, I need not tell you with how much pleasure and pride I read it.

. . . . I was just commencing a second perusal of your letter when someone came in and said the Genl. wanted to know why my company was not on the boat. Of course, "Forward March" was then the order of the day. We marched down to the wharf and on board of a small steamboat . . . and after some delay, pushed off and went around to where the *Virgin* was lying. We came alongside, made fast, and transferred out two companies, in all about eighty men to her decks and proceeded to arrange them in the order best suited to receive the Yankee launches should they make an attack. We found the vessel deserted by her captain and all the crew, except one officer and three or four men who I believe had gotten drunk and gone to sleep. The discovery was soon made, too, that the ship was nearly half full of water.

It seems, on inquiry that the Captain and crew had been alarmed by the appearance of three Yankee gunboats a mile or so astern and had skedadled, and the engineer, to prevent the ship from floating off when the tide rose, had pulled out some plug or turned something which let the sea into the ship. Here was a pretty kettle of fish. We had been sent out there to defend her while the crew should transfer about sixty tons of coal to the [steamboat] . . . which it was hoped would lighten her enough to float her over the bar. But crew being gone, nothing could be done. Capt. Campbell, who commanded the two companies, concluded to report the state of things to Genl. Page and selected your humble servant to bear the tidings.

It was a most disagreeable duty. I had to go ashore in a small boat and walk to headquarters. It would have been nothing in ordinary weather, but just as I pushed off from the ship a tremendous squall struck us. It rained and blew big guns. I thought the boat would fill before we reached the shore and indeed it was so dark that I had to trust to flashes of lightning to steer the boat by. The crew I had, too, were landsmen and not much accustomed to the oars. However, we made the trip without any more serious mishap than a good ducking. I was much amused at the two Englishmen who came ashore with me. We had not gone twenty steps before they became very anxious about sentinels. I quieted their fears by telling them that our sentinels were "all around there in front of us" and were very frightened and had orders to fire after challenging us once. Upon reporting, the Genl. sent me back with orders to Capt. C. to remain on board until dawn and defend the vessel if attacked as long as possible. The trip back was just like the first except we had no rain. The night passed off quietly and would have been pleasant enough but for the wet clothes which with a brisk breeze kept me moving all night to keep warm. At daylight we again transferred ourselves to the C.S.M. and bid farewell to the *Virgin*, flattering ourselves that a few minutes more would see us in our quarters. But just as we were nearing the wharf, another tremendous squall, more violent than the other, struck us, making our frail old tub tremble like a leaf and making it impossible to land. We had to steer for the western side of the bay for shelter. The storm lasted about an hour and then abated enough for us to land, and a more tired and sleepy set you never saw. That ended the perils of the night and it was not very long before I had forgotten them all and the "rest of mankind". . . .

Fort Morgan
July 19, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . it would be entirely fruitless for me to attempt to get a furlough from the unsympathizing powers that be. They pretend that affairs look threatening in this quarter, but nothing

has as yet shaken my profound incredulity on that subject. I might get a furlough to go to China and then return before Fort Morgan or Mobile is seriously attacked. It is said some iron-clads have reached Pensacola but that, if true, is to make the blockade of the *Tennessee* effectual, and not for an attack. The military authorities at any rate are alarmed. They have "Pressed" all the negroes at the salt works in Clark County and at Run Secour and sent them down here to work on the Fort. They propose to cut down the Citadel, the tall decagonal structure in the center of the Fort, to about seven feet off the ground and bomb-proof it. Opinion here is divided as to the utility of the scheme, but all are agreed that if an attack is really imminent the work is most untimely. . . .

Fort Morgan

July 21, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . . The rumors of the threatened attack of which you speak, secured something like confirmations yesterday afternoon in the appearance of an iron-clad, a regular "turretted monster" yesterday afternoon. She came from the direction of Pensacola. The quid-nuncs, of course, are in a great state of excitement and Gen'l. P. is clearing for action by ordering away all ladies, laundresses and non-combatants generally. I need not tell you that it will take more than one monitor to shake my incredulity on the subject of an attack, although I think Gen'l. P. is right to get ready for one. Anything is possible, but I don't think the appearance of this vessel is at all a conclusive point. They may make quite a serious demonstration with the view of drawing attention and troops to this place, but without an army they will hardly commence a serious attack. I must confess, however, that scarcely anything but the opening of the battle itself could overcome my scepticism on the subject.

You must not believe rumors nor give way to feelings of anxiety. There is very little danger of being killed here and before the Fort can be starved into surrender the war will be de-

cided on other fields. To me everything looks hopeful and promising of great results, except the relieving of General Johnston,²¹ of which we received the news yesterday. That is ominous of evil as it shows the return of the old spirit of meddling by the Richmond powers which time and again has paralyzed our cause in the Southwest. It is a spirit of self-conceit and pride which I fear will never end a war, the vicissitudes of which are so plainly governed by the hand of Providence and which is so evidently, as it seems to me, sent upon us as a chastisement and discipline. Whenever we have grown self-confident and boastful some crushing defeat has humbled us and brought us to our senses again and it is with more apprehension than hope that I see that spirit returning in the very crisis of our affairs, when peace and independence are becoming visible — distant — but still visible.

Fort Morgan

July 26th, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

Yours of the 18th was received yesterday. Nothing of interest has occurred here since my last and now that dark nights have come again, I am beginning to look forward with interest to the arrival of another unfortunate blockade runner — tho I expect if one does come, I shall wish it at the bottom of the Gulf before we get through with it.

I am sorry I can do nothing towards moving the *Denhigh* out. She seems to be a fixture in our bay, having disregarded many fine opportunities. The fact is the blockade is nearly "effective" now. Our new friend, the Iron-clad, the day after arrival, of which I wrote you, came inside the bar and anchored off Sand Island, about three miles and a half from the Fort, where she is now lying, attended by two gunboats, as pickets I

²¹General Joseph E. Johnston was removed by President Davis from the command of the Confederate Army of Tennessee on July 17, 1864, for failing to halt Sherman's advance on Atlanta.

suppose. This with the reported raid of Pollard²² from Pensacola and the rumor of more monitors at the latter place seems to have confirmed our nautical general in the belief that the day of trial is certainly approaching. Several days ago his "battle order" was published which was very like any other battle order with the exception that I think it is a little premature and likely to be forgotten before the fight of which it purports to be the herald takes place.

You see I do not share in the idea that we are going to be attacked, nor will I, until the signs become more legible than they are now. When there are six or seven turretted monsters inside the bar and an army to threaten Mobile or Meridian and Demopolis I shall become a convert. But it does not seem reasonable that the Yanks should revise the whole principle on which they have conducted the war for the benefit of Mobile. I think this must be the opinion at Dept. Hd.Qts. or they would not commence such an undertaking as cutting down the citadel of which I wrote you. If we are likely to have a bombardment in the meanwhile, the work is most ill-advised. It is very disagreeable to have Don Quixote for a general who smells blood on every breeze, transforms every windmill into a hostile giant and every flock of sheep into an army. He keeps everybody in an uncomfortable state. If there were three monitors in the bay the blockade could not be much more effective than it is at present and the worst of it is that there is no prospect of change as long as there is a single Yankee ironclad in the Gulf of Mexico, which from present appearance will be for the remainder of the war.

I need not tell you why I particularly dislike such a state of things. I sincerely hope it may change before October. There is some talk of our having a new commander and for one I hope they will send us a soldier. We have given the navy a pretty fair

²²Expedition of 1,100 Union soldiers from Barrancas, Florida to Pollard, Alabama, July 21-25, 1864, supposed to link up with a detachment of Sherman's army, but the meeting did not take place. The expedition did destroy some Confederate positions including a fort guarding the Pensacola Railroad some fifteen miles from the port. For various reports of the expedition see *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume XXXV, part 1, 413-419.

trial and it is time to send us someone who does not think a Federal ship of war invincible. I have noticed one peculiarity about our naval men here, from Admiral Buchanan down to the last midshipman and that is an unlimited capacity for getting excited. They fly off the handle at the shortest notice and on the slightest pretext. If the "six" young ladies of Morven had constituted the crew of the *Tennessee* the other day when the Yankee Monitors hove in sight they could not have gotten into a greater flutter than did her present occupants on that occasion, if all accounts are correct. I really believe they are responsible for General Page's state of mind, and of course I don't feel at all grateful to them.

Fort Morgan

August 1st, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

. . . . Things are beginning to assume a warlike aspect off this harbor and if the Yanks do not intend to attack us, for some reason or other best known to themselves, they desire to make us think so. I have written you of the arrival of the Monitor. Three or four days ago she came inside of Sand Island, in about two and a half miles of the Fort, and anchored. She now lies there, in a secure harbor, attended by several wooden vessels which Gen'l. P. will not fire on, though they are all in easy range of our guns. Yesterday afternoon another ironclad,²³ some say a double-turretted Monitor and others a Mississippi river ram, of the model of the *Tennessee* came from the westward and joined the single turret and today a smoke is seen approaching from the same direction, which is thought by some to be another. In addition to this many of the blockading fleet have taken down their top-masts and upper yards as if preparing for a fight. These things look like work though when it will begin it is impossible to say—Gen'l P. thinks very soon. But in war nothing is more deceptive than

²³Monitor *Manhattan*, single turret with two fifteen-inch guns.

Fort Morgan
August 4, 1864

My Dear Sallie:

Affairs are still looking warlike. Twenty-three vessels of the classes outside, of which three are Monitors, and mortar boats said to be coming. Yesterday a small fleet of six transports loaded with troops, and four gunboats, came out of the sound through Petit Bris pass, and late in the afternoon commenced landing troops on the west end of Dauphin Island. And this morning these troops were seen marching up the beach towards Fort Gaines. It is thought there were from two to three thousand. This would seem to indicate that Fort Gaines is to be seriously attacked first and if this should prove to be the case I should not be surprised if we had no fight at all at this fort. For if the Yankees take Gaines and Powell this fort will fall, of course, by starvation in as short a time as they could reasonably hope to take it. However, it is useless to speculate about such matters. We are in a position from which there will be no retreat and we shall have to do the best we can. Still it is possible the enemy may not run their iron-clads by us, for if they intend doing so at all, I can't see why they haven't done it already. They have been here now almost a week and could have passed us any night or day. I sincerely hope they will try to take us by an attack and not be cutting us off and starving us out. . . .

Mobile
April 2nd, 1865

My Dear Sallie:

Our city is not at all changed in appearance—the band plays in the square as usual and to judge from the display on such festive occasions, you would never suppose it is in a state of siege, although Gen'l. Maury says so. Some Yankee prisoners captured a day or two since report that Spanish Fort²⁴ was a

²⁴Spanish Fort, directly across the bay from Mobile, consisted of three redoubts connected by rifle pits and backed up by artillery.

regular take-in. They were told by their officers that they could take it in two hours. We get very little news from there. In fact, I don't suppose much is going on except digging and skirmishings. Our men say they are killing a good many. The enemy have established a battery which prevents boats going to the fort at all in the daytime. They sent a shell through the *Jeff Davis*²⁵ day before yesterday, which made her about face in double quick and also struck the *Nashville*²⁶ nine times. I think affairs look encouraging.

I understand that Gen'l. Beauregard said that the fall of Spanish Fort would insure the fall of Batteries Tracy and Hager which command the channel, as Spanish Fort is 3,000 yards from L. and H. I am happy to say I coincide with Gen'l. B. Of course, it would very unpleasant to have a strong Yankee battery at Spanish Fort, pounding away at Tracey and Hager, but still if the latter are properly constructed works they can stand it for an indefinite period, and I am told they are quite strong. I write you this by way of reassuring you, because it is the general opinion, and one which I shared until I learned the distance from the Fort to F. and H. that the capture of the fort would ultimately necessitate the capture and evacuation of Mobile. You often hear the expression, "Spanish Fort is the key to Mobile." No such thing! It is only an outpost. So unless the enemy has some very strong card hidden away somewhere which he is keeping back to play at the decisive moment, I think we are going to win this little game. So I don't want you to be one of those who say, "Of course the enemy will take the place—they always do."

²⁵According to existing records there was no Confederate warship named *Jeff Davis* at Mobile. It could have been one of the steamboats used to carry supplies to Spanish fort.

²⁶A large side-wheel steam sloop built by the Confederates at Montgomery, Alabama, and taken to Mobile for completion. Still fitting out, she took no part in the battle of Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864, but continued to operate with the Confederate naval forces defending Mobile and was one of the vessels formally surrendered to Union forces at Nanna Hubba, Alabama, May 10, 1865.

Demopolis (?)

April 27th, 1865

My Dear Sallie:

Nothing but my promise could make me write to you today. My note yesterday must have raised hopes which this one must destroy. The news from Gainesville is not believed at all here. The account here is that Gen'l Beauregard has telegraphed to Howell Cobb²⁷ telling him that a truce "to settle the national difficulties" has been agreed upon by Sherman and Johnson, and the inference here is that the basis of any arrangement will be the capitulation of Johnston's army, which is represented to be in a desperate situation. Gen'l. Thomas²⁸ has advanced from Knoxville to Saulsberry N.C. Foster²⁹ is moving from Charleston to Camden and Wilson³⁰ is before Macon, Ga., where the account says he is stopped by the news of the truce. If this is true it places Johnston in a desperate situation. The surrender of Lee is not doubted here and our cause is looked upon as gone.

This is the bluest place I have seen and I shall be glad to get away from it today. It is said that General Taylor³¹ went to Mobile yesterday from Meridian. Capt. Carpenter is here with William. I shall see him this morning and give him your father's message. It is said the negro men are all running away from Mobile to avoid the Yankee conscription.

²⁷Secretary of the Treasury under President James Buchanan; one of the prominent Southerners who met in Montgomery early in February, 1861, to found the Confederate States of America; later appointed a brigadier general and was in command of Confederate forces in southwestern Georgia during the last few months of the war.

²⁸Union general George H. Thomas.

²⁹General John G. Foster commanded one of Sherman's columns in his march through the Carolinas.

³⁰General James H. Wilson made a raid from North Alabama across central Alabama and Georgia destroying railroads, supply depots, naval establishments, etc., at Selma, Columbus, Georgia, etc.

³¹On May 4, 1865 General Richard Taylor surrendered the largest remaining army east of the Mississippi River at Citronelle, Alabama.

THE FRENCH COLONY IN MARENGO COUNTY, ALABAMA

by

Camillus J. Dismukes

Can you imagine Napoleon Bonaparte tilling the soil in Alabama? It almost happened! When the Emperor abdicated in June, 1815, in favor of his young son, he made for Rochefort where two frigates were waiting to bring him to America. Hoping against hope for a revival of popular support in France, he delayed his embarkation until his escape was cut off. Afraid of falling into implacable Bourbon hands, he surrendered to the British on July 15.¹

A large company of his followers did come to America after the Second Restoration, however. Upon the execution of Marshal Ney in 1815, they departed France. Assembling in Philadelphia, they formed an association to manage their settlement of a colony. Scouts were sent out to explore possible sites along the Mississippi, but the decision was to settle near the confluence of the Black Warrior and Tombigbee rivers in what was then the Mississippi Territory. Ill-advice convinced them that they could convert this canebreak wilderness into vineyards and groves. The deciding factor was the proximity they would have to other Frenchmen in Mobile and Louisiana.²

Congress granted the refugees, by an act of March 3, 1817, four townships there, each six miles square, at \$2 an acre. Further provisions allowed them credit for fourteen years, but stipulated that the grantees had to cultivate the olive tree and grow vineyards.³

¹Fauvelot de Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1903), 510-511; Paul A. Gagnon, *France Since 1789* (New York, Harper and Row, c1964), 97; Albert Guerard, *France: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1959), 281-282; Jesse D. Reeves, "The Napoleonic Exiles in America," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press), XXIII (1905), 13-15.

²Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 35.

³*Ibid.*, 35-36.

American historians assume that all these Napoleonists were expelled from France, or fled to escape death from the restored Bourbon dynasty. French historians, however, give little to support and much to refute this idea.

Louis XVIII came to the throne in April, 1814, an aged and gouty man with no wish to resume his long exile. He was willing to make concessions because he recognized that the 25-year history of the Revolution and Empire could not be written off by returning to absolutism which had caused it.⁴ The men who secured his throne required his commitment to liberalism. Louis' first act was to grant a *Charte* which established a liberal constitutional monarchy. By the terms of this Charter, the continuance of all pensions, ranks, and honors of the Napoleonic regime was guaranteed.⁵ Although economic necessity required a reduction in the army, Napoleon's veterans who could not be retained in active service were retired on half-pay.⁶ Louis XVIII created a new House of Peers, but it was an equal amalgam of Napoleonists and royalist aristocrats. It is especially significant that every person named to his cabinet was formerly a minister under Napoleon⁷ — although Talleyrand, the opportunist who foresaw the Empire's downfall, had ruptured with Napoleon in time to be chiefly instrumental in restoring the Bourbons to power.⁸

Even after Napoleon's Hundred Days and second abdication, Louis continued determined to heal the nation's wounds and to retain in his cabinet Napoleon's old administrators.⁹ This was

⁴Andre Leveque, *Histoire de la civilisation française* (New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1949), 378; Daniel P. Resnick, *The White Terror and the Political Reaction after Waterloo* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1966), 1.

⁵Herbert Butterfield, *et. al.*, *A Short History of France* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1961), 137; Pierre de la Gorce, *La Restauration: Louis XVIII* (Paris, Librairie Plon, 1926) I, 17.

⁶Butterfield, *Short History*, 138; Ernest Daudet, *Histoire de la restauration* (Paris Librairie Hachette, 1882), 29.

⁷Gagnon, *France Since 1789*, 100.

⁸*Ibid.*, 80; Guerard, *France*, 278.

⁹Frederick B. Artz, *France Under the Bourbon Restoration* (New York, Russell and Russell, Inc., 1931), 17.

partly from his realization that his throne depended upon their support and partly from the Allied conquerors' insistence that he use only men experienced in government. Such were not to be found in his own Royalist ranks, who had been out of power and in exile for many years. Despite his efforts, Louis was compelled to submit a little to the pressure of the Ultra-royalist party, headed by his brother, the Count d'Artois,¹⁰ and to the pressure of the Allies enraged at Napoleon's audacious return from Elba. In his proclamation of July 16, 1815, the king continued his declaration of intent to maintain a liberal government by granting a general amnesty, from which were excluded only 57 chief supporters and conspirators of the Hundred Days. The act proscribed a list of 19 men to be tried for treason, and inflicted on 38 others the traditional severe (for a Frenchman) penalty of exile from Paris to the provinces.¹¹ His minister of Police, Fouché, ex-Napoleonist and friend of the condemned, arranged for the escape from the country prior to the proclamation of all except Marshal Ney. It seems evident that this was done with Louis' acquiescence. Even Ney was fore-warned in time to escape,¹² and given intentionally two opportunities to escape his guards after arrest. Louis, a compassionate man, wrung his hands and cried, "We gave him every chance to escape! Why did he let himself be caught?" The answer is that Ney believed he could exonerate himself, and he was too proud to take flight even to save his life.¹³

The government did sentence during the period from July, 1815, to June, 1816, a total of 3,746 persons for political offenses, but very few were executed. Most were released immediately under surveillance, and the remainder within five months. This *Terreur blanche*, or White Terror to contrast with the Red Ter-

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹Felix Ponteil, *La Monarchie parlementaire, 1815-1848* (Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1958), 16. The Alabama grantees on the proscribed list were the Lallemand brothers, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, Grouchy, and Clausel.

¹²Reeves, "Naponeonic Exiles." 23.

¹³R. F. Delderfield, *Napoleon's Marshals* (Philadelphia, Chilton Co., 1966), 218; Resnick, *White Terror*, 70.

ror of the Revolution, was actually insignificant compared to that of 1793 when 17,000 persons were condemned to death by the courts.¹⁴ It loses all proportion of magnitude compared to the slaughter of 20,000 Huguenots in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1573¹⁵ and the countless thousands of Protestants burned or disemboweled alive during the following century. *Le Terreur blanche* was restricted to the Midi, and was directed more at Protestants than at Imperialists.¹⁶ The oppression of Bonapartists seems miniscule compared to current American traffic accidents which caused 55,000 deaths in 1968.

Louis XVIII had the White Terror under control by 1816, and maintained his policy of toleration quite successfully until 1820. The murder in that year of the Duc de Berry, sole prospect for continuation of the Bourbon dynasty, gave the Court d'Artois (later Charles X) a stronger position against the liberals.¹⁷ By that time the Napoleonic refugees were already established in Alabama.

Some historians magnify the White Terror, others consider it insignificant and restricted to the south. Reason seems to demand a better explanation of why over five hundred families followed five proscribed Imperial generals into exile. Even though it was natural for them to feel some panic at Ney's summary execution as a traitor to the nation, Frenchmen are not a breed to flee from panic. We must bear in mind the guarantees given the *egares*, and remember that the vote of 157 to 1 for Ney's death included some of Napoleon's own marshals.¹⁸

We must rather conjecture that the motivation behind this

¹⁴Resnick, *White Terror*, 107, 114, 118, 126-132.

¹⁵Butterfield, *Short History*, 52.

¹⁶D. W. Brogan, *The French Nation from Napoleon to Petain, 1814-1940* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957), 17; Gagnon, *France Since 1789*, 96; Resnick, *White Terror*, 14-54, 116-117.

¹⁷Gagnon, *France Since 1789*, 103-104.

¹⁸Geoffrey Bruun, *Europe and the French Imperium 1799-1814* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1938), 34, 200.

mass emigration was blind, unreasoning loyalty to an emperor who drew men's emotions to him magnetically, a superb psychologist who bound men to him by good pay, extravagant praises, and lofty promotions.¹⁹ It is true that some of Napoleon's officers deserted him when the writing on the wall showed the necessity of doing so to gain peace in Europe and to salvage their own high titles. But the common soldier remained loyal to his Emperor, greeted his return from Elba with joy, and refused to fire on him. Marshal Ney's conduct is a prime example of this emotional magnetism. Realistic enough to know that continuation of the Empire meant endless war, Ney went over to the Bourbons, and was dispatched to block Bonaparte's march to Paris. When the two forces met, Napoleon advanced alone from his ranks to meet Ney. France's really great man, unable to fulfill his oath to bring the usurper back in an iron cage, melted into the tearful embrace of his intended victim.²⁰

The spirit of the Napoleonic soldier, as treated so often in the memoirs of the time and by the authors of Romanticism, seems well summed up in a poem by Heinrich Heine, "The Two Grenadiers." Two grenadiers are returning from imprisonment following Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign. Reaching Germany, they learn that France has been defeated and the Emperor captured. The two soldiers weep *bitterlich*. One vows that he would gladly give his life for his emperor, although his wife and child at home would suffer. "What matter wife and child?" cries the other. "Let them go beg if they hunger. My Emperor is prisoner!" He exacts the promise that, if he dies, his companion will carry him back to French soil and bury him gun-in-hand. Then, as so martially set to the strains of the "Marseillaise" by Robert Schumann, he promises, "When again the cannons roar, I shall know that my Emperor has returned. Then shall I spring from my grave to protect him!"²¹

¹⁹Leveque, *Histoire*, 354-355; Resnick, *White Terror*, 10.

²⁰Gagnon, *France Since 1789*, 96; Guerard, *France*, 280.

²¹This poem may be found in various editions of the *Oxford Book of German Poetry*/ *Das Oxford Buch Deutscher Dichtung*.

NACH Frankreich zogen zwei Grenadier',
Die waren in Rußland gefangen ;
Und als sie kamen ins deutsche Quartier,
Sie ließen die Köpfe hangen.

Da hörten sie beide die traurige Mär':
Daß Frankreich verloren gegangen,
Besiegt und zerschlagen das große Heer —
Und der Kaiser, der Kaiser gefangen.

Da weinten zusammen die Grenadier'
Wohl ob der kläglichen Kunde.
Der eine sprach : » Wie weh wird mir,
Wie brennt meine alte Wunde ! ❧

Der andre sprach : » Das Lied ist aus,
Auch ich möcht' mit dir sterben ;
Doch hab' ich Weib und Kind zu Haus,
Die ohne mich verderben. ❧

» Was schert mich Weib, was schert mich Kind,
Ich trage weit beßres Verlangen ;
Laß sie betteln gehn, wenn sie hungrig sind—
Mein Kaiser, mein Kaiser gefangen !

Gewähr mir, Bruder, eine Bitt' :
Wenn ich jetzt sterben werde,
So nimm meine Leiche nach Frankreich mit,
Begrab mich in Frankreichs Erde.

Das Ehrenkreuz am roten Band
Sollst du aufs Herz mir legen ;
Die Flinte gib mir in die Hand,
Und gürt mir um den Degen.

So will ich liegen und horchen still,
Wie eine Schildwach', im Grabe,
Bis einst ich höre Kanonengebrüll
Und wiehernder Rosse Getrabe.

Dann reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab,
Viel Schwerter klirren und blitzen ;
Dann steig' ich gewaffnet hervor aus dem Grab—
Den Kaiser, den Kaiser zu schützen ! ❧

We can scarcely reconcile flight from a conciliatory king, whose tolerance was assured by men of their own party in the ministry, with men who had manifested on two-score battlefields, from incredible Marengo to inevitable Waterloo, the courage of Ney and the patriotism of the two grenadiers. It seems more likely that they fled the comparative safety and comfort of France to the wild canebrakes of western Alabama from a feeling of frustration, of despair, of voluntary protest-sacrifice. Possibly they inflicted these hardships on themselves from the same motivation which makes Oriental protesters immolate themselves in flame, the same unreasoning protest which led youthful enthusiasts to commit suicide in the Vietnam Peace Moratorium²² as their offering, however futile, for their beliefs.

The *avant-garde* of the Tombigbee colonists sailed from Philadelphia for Mobile in December, 1817. Partially because of sympathy for their project, partially out of compassion for their shipwreck just outside the harbor, they were welcomed warmly and entertained elegantly in this city annexed to the United States only four years earlier. As they left Mobile for the trip up-river in a Federal revenue cutter, the wharf was crowded with their newly-made friends wishing them "*bon voyage*" and "*au revoir*." After changing from the cutter to a barge at St. Stephens, they proceeded up the Tombigbee to a chalky bluff where they chose to settle. To their town they gave the name Demopolis, "city of the people," and to the county they gave the name Marengo to honor the victory which in effect placed the imperial crown on Napoleon's head.²³

With the advanced mission established, other settlers followed quickly. The main body sailed from Philadelphia on the schooner *McDonough*, and arrived at Mobile the following April.²⁴ They also lingered long enough at Mobile to make friends there.

²²October 15, 1969.

²³Vincent J. Esposito and John Robert Elting, *A Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), np; Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama* (Birmingham, Webb Book Co., 1900), 624; Bourrienne, *Memoirs*, 167.

²⁴Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 38.

These attachments were to serve them well when they had to abandon their Marengo grants.

The original act provided that emigrants other than those named in the grants might join the colony in Marengo. A group of refugees from the slave uprisings in Santo Domingo came in 1820,²⁵ and, strange coincidence, there came also a Spanish general, Juan Rico, who had led the resistance to Napoleon's invasion of Spain.²⁶ What reminiscences the former adversaries must have had together!

We must see the colonists on the Tombigbee in terms of their past luxury and current poverty, these men who had been counts and generals, academicians and courtiers of a Bourbon king and a proletariat emperor. That they were greatly reduced in circumstances is shown by the fact that none bought the maximum allotment of 640 acres, and many had to combine to raise \$80 for purchasing even 40 acres.

They reached Alabama already destitute — except for elegant uniforms and silk gowns, which became their plowman's habit and milking dresses. Their poverty only increased under the reverses they suffered. They came under stipulation that they grow the vine and olive, these men who had never handled a spade, these women who had never done domestic work. Militiamen can return to their abandoned plows, but career soldiers have no orientation with the soil. Surely no colonization was ever made by people more courageous or less equipped, and no other colony had such compounding of mistakes and misfortunes.

Three times they were forced to abandon their arduous developments. The impetuous Latins laid out streets and built cabins without waiting for surveying. When the government surveyors arrived, Demopolis proved to be outside their grant, on

²⁵Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama and Her People* (Chicago, American Historical Society, 1927), I, 114.

²⁶Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, S. J. Clarke Co., 1921), I, 483; Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 630-631.

land previously sold to an American company. Moving deeper into the wilderness, they established a village which they named Aigleville (Eagleville) in honor of Napoleon's standard. It is inconceivable that they should again clear land and build cabins without verification of title, but the story was repeated. They had to abandon again their cabins and improvements.²⁷

The Tombigbee grant was made upon condition that the colonists grow the vine and olive. It proved difficult to even make the plantings because the region was a canebrake wilderness. The plants, shipped from France, were often either of the wrong variety, arrived out of season, or were improperly packed — even if the colonists had known how to tend them. Frost killed back the olive trees, and the vines which managed to live ripened their fruit in the summer months with the result that the fermentation was more acetic than vinous.²⁸

Most colonizations are made with regard to water transportation, either on the coast or on navigable rivers. This is best exemplified by the French settlements along the St. Lawrence river, where each farm is a narrow strip extending far back from the shore. The allotments in Marengo were made without regard for access to water transportation. In the absence of teams and wagons, or roads through the impenetrable canebrake, many of the settlers had to live on their town grants while their farm land went untended.²⁹

²⁷Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 626, 631.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 632.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 631. Supplemental garden and town lots were granted, varying according to the size of the main grant:

Main grant	Garden lot	Town lot
480 acres	12 acres	100 feet front and 200 feet deep
320 acres	6 acres	100 feet front and 100 feet deep
240 acres	6 acres	100 feet front and 100 feet deep
160 acres	3 acres	50 feet front and 100 feet deep
120 acres	3 acres	50 feet front and 100 feet deep

American State Papers. Documents of the Congress of the United States in Relation to their Public Lands (Washington, Gales and Seaton, 1859), IV, 150-152.

Such water as there was proved disastrous. The flood waters from the Tombigbee and its tributaries left stagnant, mosquito-breeding pools. Many settlers died from malarial fever.³⁰

The colonists accepted very uninformed advice in selecting site for their colony. The Demopolis area lies in the Alabama prairie belt, where the soil is as adhesive as Scotch tape when wet, as hard as mortar when dry. Later, when men had mastered the difficulties of this sticky goo, the region became favored for cotton culture;³¹ but that was too late to save the Vine and Olive Colony.

Colonists in Georgia found out quickly that one man alone can not clear and cultivate enough land to support a family. Oglethorpe moved quickly to bring over indentured servants, and the threatened collapse of the colony brought an early rescission of rules prohibiting slaves.³² The French colonists in Marengo had no slaves and few servants.³³

Suspicion developed against the French because a group under General Charles Lallemant never took up their lands. Instead, they sailed from Philadelphia one month after the first group left for Alabama, carrying six field pieces, 600 muskets, 400 sabres, and 1200 pounds of powder. This group established the Champ d'Asile colony in Texas. Their avowed purpose was to establish an agricultural colony, but their cargo flamed the rumors that their true purpose was to seize Mexico and there proclaim Joseph Bonaparte (then in New Jersey) King of Spain and the West Indies. It was claimed that they sold their

³⁰Gaius Whitfield, Jr., "The French Grants in Alabama: A History of the Founding of Demopolis," Publications of the *Alabama Historical Society*, IV (1899-1903), 321-355.

³¹Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Formative Period in Alabama 1815-1828* (Montgomery, Alabama, 1922), 21, 57-58.

³²Allen D. Candler, Comp., *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta, Franklin Publishing Co.), V (1906), 491-492, 634; James Etheridge Callaway, *The Early Settlement of Georgia* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1948), 31-36.

³³Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 631.

Marengo grants to raise money for this purpose, and that the Marengo colony was a subterfuge for this major objective. Lallemand's welcome by the pirate Lafitte could not fail to increase these suspicions.³⁴

The crowning blow to the Frenchmen's efforts to fulfill their contract against overwhelming odds came from swarms of American squatters who moved onto their lands and would not be dislodged. The courts upheld the grantees, but the continuous litigation and hardships finally forced the French to sell their lands at sacrificial prices to migrating Americans.³⁵ A few remained in the area, intermarried with the Americans, but most were gone by 1830. Some settled in the Mobile area, others returned to the France which most of them never had had any actual reason for quitting.³⁶

These were courageous though impractical people. But they were Frenchmen. Wherever Frenchmen are, there is *la vie joyeuse*. Observe, for example, the contrast between the convivial Huguenot and his dour Scotch-Irish or grim Puritan neighbors in America. After the hard days' labor, these Frenchmen turned their crude frontier cabins into ballrooms to re-live a few hours each evening the gay social life they had known in Paris.³⁷

THE GRANTEES

The list of original grantees in the *American State Papers* ignores conventions peculiar to French spelling. I have restored correct spelling to names which are French, and arranged the list in alphabetical order for convenience in consultation. We note again that not all the grantees took up their lands. Comparison of the grantee list with a list of actual patentees in Winston Smith's *Days of Exile* reveals that extensive exchange

³⁴Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 42-64.

³⁵Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 632.

³⁶Abernethy, *Formative Period*, 40.

³⁷Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 633.

of lots took place among the Napoleonists, and that many patents went to bearers of Anglo-Gaelic rather than Gallo-Italic names. Dr. Smith's narrative is valuable for its scholarship and that human-interest appeal which only a native writer can give.³⁸ I have given some personal data in my list, including approximations of identity from court, census, and burial records. The numbers following the names indicate the acres in the main farm grants.

Achard (see Allouard)

Allain, Joseph — 120

Allard, Henri — 120

Alma, Anselme — 120

Allouard and Achard — 40

Amedée (see Penard)

Anduze, Mathieu-Bernard — 480

Angeli, Hiacinthe — 120

Antoine — 240. A Bertrand Antonie died in Mobile County in 1839.³⁹

Arnaud, Camille — 240

Astolphi, Laurent — 480

Audibert, veuve (widow) — 120

Auze, frères (brothers) — 240. George Auze died in Mobile County in 1841. Charles Auze, age 40, died there in 1856.⁴⁰

Azan — 120

Bacle, Alexis, fils, aîné (Junior and Senior) — 160

Badaraque, Thomas — 480

Bailly, Michel — 120

Baizeau — 60

Balbuena, Joseph — 160

Baltar — 160

³⁸Winston Smith, *Days of Exile: The Story of the Vine and Olive Colony in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, 1967). My chief personal memory of Demopolis is that of having my rowboat capsized under the White Bluff by a passing river steamer—which somewhat dates me.

³⁹Lois Dumas Mitchell and Dorothy Ivison Moffett, Comps., (henceforth designated as M&M), *Burial Records, Mobile County, Alabama, 1820-1856* (Mobile, Mobile Genealogical Society, 1963), 43.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 70, 227.

Barbarroux, Joseph — 240

Barbe, Antoine — 160

Barrau — 160

Barthélemie — 40

Batre, Charles — 120. From the 1850 Mobile census: Adele Batre 50F France, A. Batre 28M Alabama, and Charles Batre 23M Alabama.⁴¹ Fleming Batte died in Marengo County;⁴² Thomas Batte married in Marengo County⁴³ A daughter of Alfred Batre died in Mobile County in 1854.⁴⁴

Baumier, César — 160

Bauzan, Pierre — 160

Bayal, Honoré — 480. An Edward Bayol married in Marengo County.⁴⁵

Belair, Louis — 480

Belange, Mal. (Maj.?) Denis — 320

Belmère, père, fils (father, son) — 160

Bergache, Cadet (the younger) — 240

Bernard, Henri—160. From the 1850 Mobile census: S. Bernard 58M France.⁴⁶ A son of F. J. Bernard died in Mobile County in 1853.⁴⁷ A General Bernard was a commander at Waterloo.⁴⁸

Besson, Louis — 480

Bistos — 40

Beyelle, Joseph — 480

Blancon and Taverly — 40

Blandin, Jean — 120

Blaquerolle — 160

⁴¹Eleanor M. Kilduff, Comp., *1850 Census, City of Mobile, Alabama* (Mobile, Mobile Genealogical Society, 1966), 3, 24.

⁴²Flora Dainwood England, Comp., *Alabama Source Book* (Selma, Alabama, 1964), I, 42.

⁴³*Ibid.*, I, 43.

⁴⁴M&M, *Burial Records*, 201.

⁴⁵England, *Source Book*, I, 193.

⁴⁶Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 10.

⁴⁷M&M, *Burial Records*, 176.

⁴⁸Henry Lachouque, *Napoleon's Battles* (New York, E. P. Dutton Co., 1967), 440.

- Bogy — 240
 Boilandy, Eugénie — 120
 Boitau, François — 120
 Bonneau — 40. Arnoldus Bonneau married in Dallas County.⁴⁰
 Bonno, J. — 480
 Bono, Charles — 240
 Bordas, Élie — 160. Susanna Borde died in Mobile County in 1855.⁵⁰
 Bourlon, E. — 240
 Boutière, J.-Claude-Benoît — 240
 Boutière, François-Gaspard — 120
 Brechemin, Louis — 240
 Bringier — 240
 Brugièrre, Charles — 120
 Brugièrre, Charles — 240
 Bujac, Mathieu and Alfred, frères (brothers) — 240
 Bujey, Antoine — 120
 Bulliard, Étienne — 160
 Burckle, Emanuel — 120
 Burgues, Jean-Bernard — 120
 Buttaud — 120
 Butaud, Isaac — 240
 Campardon, Baptiste — 160
 Canonio, François — 160
 Canonge, Pierre-Auguste — 480
 Carebaux, Guillaume — 240
 Gastan, Étienne — 160
 Cavoroc, Charles — 120
 Champenois, P.-J. — 240. From the 1850 Mobile census: Isaac Champenois 32M Alabama, and J. P. Champenois 28 Mississippi.⁵¹
 Chapon — 120
 Chapotin — 40
 Chapron, J.-M. — 480

⁴⁰England, *Source Book*, I, 15.

⁵⁰M&M, *Burial Records*, 213.

⁵¹Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 26.

Charassin, Colonel — 320. He accompanied Lallemand to Texas.⁵²

Charles, Fermin-B. — 240

Chasserian, Benoît — 320

Chaudron, Edward — 480. Edward Chaudron was in Marengo County in 1840-43. Felix Chaudron married in Marengo County.⁵³ Mrs. G. Chaudron 76F St. Domingo, Julius Chaudron 50M Pennsylvania, and Felix Chaudron 40M Pennsylvania are listed in the 1850 Mobile census.⁵⁴

Chaudron, Simon — 480. Simon Chaudron, age 88, watchmaker, died in Mobile County in 1846,⁵⁵ and is buried in Church Street Graveyard.⁵⁶ He edited at one time the *Abeille Américaine*, and was a noted poet both in Alabama and France.⁵⁷

Chauvot, Charles — 160

Cirode, Guillaume — 120

Clareton, Joseph-Louis — 480

Clausel, General Bertrand. Count Clausel saved Napoleon's Spanish campaign by taking over command when higher officers were killed and rallying the troops.⁵⁸ He commanded as a marshal at Bordeaux during the Hundred Days. He did not take up his Marengo grant, but settled on Mobile Bay as a produce gardener.⁵⁹ Amnestied in 1820, he returned to France and served as a deputy in the National Assembly.⁶⁰

⁵²Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 83.

⁵³England, *Source Book*, I, 92, 335.

⁵⁴Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 26.

⁵⁵M&M, *Burial Records*, 104.

⁵⁶WPA Writers, *Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South* (New York, Richard R. Smith, 1941), 216.

⁵⁷Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 629.

⁵⁸C. S. Forester, *Napoleon and His Court* (London, Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1924), 188-189.

⁵⁹Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 629.

⁶⁰Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 110.

Cluis, J. Jérôme — 480. Colonel Cluis, who had been an aide to Marshal Lefebvre, kept a tavern near Greensboro.⁶¹ He is buried in Christ Church Graveyard, Mobile, with his wife, the Marchioness de Moziès.⁶² Emilie Louise Cluis 54 France and F. V. Cluis 38M France were in Mobile at the 1850 census.⁶³

Colomel — 40

Colona, Dornano B. — 320

Comb, Colonel Michel — 320

Combes, Germain — 120

Combes, Vincent — 120. One of the Combes was a colonel under Napoleon.⁶⁴

Conde — 240 (lot 274)

Conde, Charles — 240 (lot 273)

Constantin and Dechoule — 40

Contardi, Louis — 160

Conte, Honoré — 120

Conte, Marius — 160

Coquillon, frères (brothers) — 240

Corso, François — 160

Cousin, David — 120

Cuchet — 40

Dalaunay (probably Delaunay) — 40

Dalmazeau, J. — 120

Darembert — 40

David, Louise — 120

Davis, L. A. — 240

Debrosse, Charles — 480

Dechoule (see Constantin)

Decave, Marc Lewis — 120

Décorme, Charles — 160

Défourni, Col. Fabius — 320. He commanded one of Lallemand's companies in Texas.⁶⁵

⁶¹Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 629.

⁶²WPA Writers, *Alabama*, 62.

⁶³Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 38, 139.

⁶⁴Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 29.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 86.

Delaporte, Louis — 120

Delaunay (see Victoire). Peter Deloney's will was probated in Marengo County.⁶⁶

Delpit — 60

Demerest, veuve (widow) — 240

Demony, Dominique-Victor — 160. An infant of A. Demouy died in Mobile in 1865.⁶⁷

Deprest, René, frère, and Zach. — 240

Derfouch, Charles — 160

Désafoe, C. — 40

Deschamps, Francois — 160

Descourt, Leonard-Alex — 240

Desmarès — 160

Desplan, Samuel — 160. Pierre Desplans, age 37, native of France, was living in Mobile in 1850.⁶⁸

Desportes, Léonte — 120

Desroures — 160

Devengen — 40

Dirat, Louis-M. — 480

Dor — 120

Douarche, Colonel — 320. One of the company commanders in Texas.⁶⁹

Drouet, Pierre — 240

Drouet, Pierre — 480

Dubarry, Jean — 480

Dubosq — 120. Leon Duboc 35M France is in the 1850 Mobile census.⁷⁰ The name Dubosq was modified to Dubose in South Carolina. Eujinia Dubose's will was probated in Marengo County 1840-43.⁷¹ Many Duboses in Alabama are descendants from South Carolina through Georgia.

⁶⁶England, *Source Book*, I, 93.

⁶⁷M&M, *Burial Records*, 215.

⁶⁸Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 39.

⁶⁹Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 86.

⁷⁰Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 45.

⁷¹England, *Source Book*, 93.

Ducoing, Pré. — 480

Du Colombier, Martin-J. — 480

Ducommun, Joseph — 120

Ducommun, Joseph — 480

Dufourg, D.-V. — 120. Louis Dufour(?), age 53, native of France, died in Mobile County in 1853.⁷²

Dufourg, F. — 120

Dufourg, Jean-Jacques — 240

Dumas, Antoine — 120. Azariah Dumos [*sic*] was a head of household in Marengo County in 1830.⁷³ Isham Dumas and Calvin J. Dumas married in that county.⁷⁴ Jeremiah Dumas died there in 1840-43.⁷⁵ Count General Mathieu Dumas was one of Napoleon's generals.⁷⁶

Dumenil — 240

Dupont — 96

Dupouy, Nicholas-A. — 480

Dupui and Ragon — 40

Durand, Jean-Baptiste — 480. Mrs. Louisa Durand, age 91, died in Mobile County in 1851.⁷⁷

Durière, François — 160

Duteste (see Emery)

Duval, Jacques-S. — 480. A child of W. Duval died in Mobile County in 1846.⁷⁸

Emely — 480

Emery and Duteste — 480

Fagot — 60

Fallot, Eugène-Hyacinthe — 160

Farcy — 160

⁷²M&M, *Burial Records*, 180.

⁷³England, *Source Book*, I, 66.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 183, 264.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 93.

⁷⁶Lachouque, *Napoleon's Battles*, 62, 242.

⁷⁷M&M, *Burial Records*, 152.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 104.

Farrouilh, A. — 120

Fauchon, Höé — 160

Fauquier — 160

Fisher — 160. L. H. Fisher, native of France, was 32 years old at the 1850 Mobile census.⁷⁰

Fisler — 120

Follin, Auguste-Firmin — 480. A. F. Follin's estate was probated in Marengo County 1840-43.⁸⁰ Mrs. Malinda Follin, age 69, died in Mobile County in 1851.⁸¹

Follin, Georges — 480

Follin, frères (brothers) — 160

Formento, Felix — 160

Fouquet, âiné (the elder) — 60

Fouquet, J. and Moulin — 40

Fourestier, Élie — 480

Fournier, Honoré — 240. The Fourniers were among the Santo Domingo refugees to Marengo.⁸² Isadore Founnier died in Mobile County in 1855.⁸³

Fouasche, Pierre — 160

Foutanges, P. F. — 480

Frédéric, Louis-Auguste — 160

Frenage, Jean-Pierre — 480

Frenage, Marc-Antoine — 480

Fux, Louis — 160

Galabert, Colcnel Louis — 320. He was one of the leaders in the Texas expedition.⁸⁴

Gallard, Pierre — 240. Members of the South Carolina Gaillard family immigrated to Mobile. We can not tell whether the A. Gaillard, whose daughter died in Mobile in 1851,⁸⁵ is from the

⁷⁰Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 49.

⁸⁰England, *Source Book*, I, 93.

⁸¹M&M, *Burial Records*, 153.

⁸²Whitfield, "French Grants," 345.

⁸³M&M, *Burial Records*, 216.

⁸⁴Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 64.

⁸⁵M&M, *Burial Records*, 154.

Marengo Gallard or the South Carolina Gaillard family. The use of the initial alone is a French convention.

Garnier, fils (Junior) — 240

Garnier, frère (brother) — 480

Gatly, Antoine — 160

Gaunay, Nicholas — 120

Gavesche, Pierre — 240

Gavesche, Pierre — 480

Genin, Charles F. — 160

George, Madame (Mrs.) — 480

George, Edward — 480. Stewart George was a head of household in Marengo County at the 1830 census.⁸⁰ People of this name are numerous in the Tombigbee and Mobile areas, and most are probably English.

George, fils, aîné, Edward (Edward Sr. and Edward Jr.) — 120

Gérard, Hyacinthe — 160

Germond and Rivière — 240

Gilbal, Antoine — 160

Gilbert — 160

Glenville — 40

Godan, Victoire — 120

Godat — 120

Godemar, Jean-Baptiste — 120

Gouiran, Joseph-Michel — 120

Grégoire, Étienne — 160

Grillet, Francois — 160

Groning — 160

Grouchet, Louis — 320

Grouchy (see Mal)

Grouchy, Colonel Alphonse — 320

Grouchy, Captain (or Colonel?) Victor — 160. These were the sons of Emmanuel, Marquis de Grouchy. He was Napoleon's marshal on whom the defeat of Waterloo was blamed. Either through hesitation or confused orders from Napoleon, he let a Prussian force under Blücher evade him and join up with Well-

⁸⁰England, *Source Book*, 67.

ington to turn the tide of victory.⁸⁷ He and his two sons, Colonels Alphonse and Victor Grouchy, reached Baltimore in January, 1816, under assumed names, he being on Louis' death list.⁸⁸ Marshal Grouchy did not accompany his sons to Alabama.⁸⁹ He returned instead to France, where he died in 1847, still trying to exonerate his failure on June 15, 1815.⁹⁰

Gubert, J. H. — 480

Guilleault — 180

Guillot — 320

Guybert, H. — 120

Haez — 120

Hamel, Victor — 480

Harraneder, Charles — 160

Havard — 160. An infant of C. C. Havard died in Mobile County in 1837.⁹¹

Henry, Germain — 160. The 1830 census of Marengo County lists William Henry as a head of household.⁹² Francis Henry, age 44F, native of France, died in Mobile County in 1852.⁹³

Humbert, Jacques — 160. Humbert went to Texas rather than take up his grant.⁹⁴

Hurtel, J. — 384

Ilari, Benoît — 160

Jamet — 160

Janin — 40

Jeandreau, Jean — 240. Jeandreau served also with Lafayette in the American Revolution. He is buried in Church Street Graveyard, Mobile.⁹⁵

⁸⁷C. W. Crawley, Ed., *New Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge, At the University Press, 1965), IX, 314-315.

⁸⁸Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 24.

⁸⁹Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 629.

⁹⁰Delderfield, *Napoleon's Marshals*, 231.

⁹¹M&M, *Burial Records*, 30.

⁹²England, *Source Book*, I, 68.

⁹³M&M, *Burial Records*, 167.

⁹⁴Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 89.

⁹⁵WPA, *Alabama*, 216

Jeannet, Georges — 480. Richard Jeannett, age 30, died in Mobile County in 1856.⁹⁶

Jeannet, J  . — 160

Jeannet, Louis-Ren   — 320

Jogan, Antonin — 240

Jordan, Colonel Ambroise — 320. Colonel Jordan was an aide-de-camp to Napoleon.⁹⁷ J. L. Jourdan, age 37, died in Mobile County in 1856.⁹⁸

Jouny, Louis-Michel — 120

Keller, Jonas — 240. A. Kellen, age 34, was in Mobile in 1850.⁹⁹

Knappe, Phillippe — 160. Two children of C. P. Knapp died in Mobile County in 1846.¹⁰⁰

Lacloix, Ren  -Fran  ois — 160

Lacombe, Pierre — 480

Ladurelle, Auguste — 480

Lagay — 40

Lajonie — 480

Lakanal — 480. Joseph Lakanal was a priest turned professor and revolutionist. As a member of the National Convention, he voted to send Louis XVI to the guillotine. He established the central school system of France, and was honored with the first membership when the Institut de France was organized. In 1809 Napoleon made him inspector general of weights and measures, in which position he standardized the metric system. In America he was the chief instigator of the plot to make Joseph Bonaparte King of Spain (and therefore of all Spanish-America), according to letters intercepted by the French minister to Washington. He went to Texas with the Champ d'Asile group rather than taking up his grant. Lakanal served briefly as president of the

⁹⁶M&M, *Burial Records*, 232.

⁹⁷Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 29.

⁹⁸M&M, *Burial Records*, 232.

⁹⁹Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 77.

¹⁰⁰M&M, *Burial Records*, 106.

College of Orleans in New Orleans, but later settled on Mobile Bay where he lived until returning to France in 1837. There he held his position in the Institut de France until his death in 1845.¹⁰¹

Lallemand, General Charles — 480. Charles Lallemand had a brilliant military career under Napoleon, serving under the Directory, Consulate, and Empire. He was Junot's aide-de-camp in Egypt. Promoted to colonel after the Battle of Jena (1806), he became brigadier general in 1811. Taking allegiance to the Restoration, he served as Commander of l'Aisne. His loyalty was with his exiled emperor, however, for he developed a plot against Louis with his brother Henri and General Lefebvre-Desnouettes. The three were, after Ney, Napoleon's leaders during the Hundred Days, and all three were on Louis' treason list promulgated at the Second Restoration. Charles Lallemand managed the plans for Napoleon's escape to America, and asked to share his exile to St. Helena. Louis had other plans for him, as noted above, so Fouché effected his escape to America. He was president of the association to form the Marengo colony, but he did not accompany it to Alabama. He led instead an expedition to Texas, which joined at Galveston with another expedition under General Rigaud. The combined force, under Lallemand's command, and augmented by an assortment of Spanish, Mexican, and American freebooters, proceeded to the place on the Trinity river which Lallemand had chosen as the site for his Champ d'Asile colony. This colony was short-lived because of Spanish military action. The ousted settlers returned to Galveston, where they might have remained except for a great storm which destroyed the town and filled all the cisterns with salt water. The battered remnant straggled into New Orleans, from where most returned to France. There Charles Lallemand took his seat in the Council of Peers, and was made commander of Corsica. Napoleon's esteem for him is shown by a legacy in his will of 100,000 francs.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 29-31, 44-61, 111.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 16-36, 64, 82-110.

Lallemand, General Henri — 480. Lt. Gen. Henri Lallemand married in Philadelphia a niece of the rich Stephen Girard. He went no farther than New Orleans with his brother's Texas expedition. From there he returned to Philadelphia and settled near Joseph Bonaparte in Bordentown, New Jersey.¹⁰³

Landerin, François — 120

Lapeyre — 60

Lapeyre, Jean-Baptiste — 160

Larau, Sully — 120

Laroderie, Alphonse — 240

Latapie — 40

Latapie, Antoine — 160. He was a Napoleonic colonel.¹⁰⁴

Laurent, Clément — 120

Laurent, Maurice — 160. In the Mobile 1850 census are listed John Laurant 65M France, and F. Laurent 42M France.¹⁰⁵

Lauret, Louis — 160

Leboutellier, Michel — 480

Lebrusse — 40

Lecampion, François — 240

Lecoq du Marcelay — 480

Lefebvre-Desnouëttes, General — 480. We must avoid confusing General Lefebvre-Desnouëttes with Marshal François Lefebvre, duc de Danzig. Count General Charles Lefebvre-Desnouëttes commanded a cavalry division at Waterloo,¹⁰⁶ where he is said to have fought with the rage of desperation.¹⁰⁷ He was the wealthiest and highest ranking officer who went to Alabama.¹⁰⁸ Receiving a bequest of 100,00 marks from Napoleon's will in 1821, he was

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰⁵Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 73, 83.

¹⁰⁶Christopher Hibbert, *Waterloo: Napoleon's Last Campaign* (New York, New American Library, 1967), 145-149, 196.

¹⁰⁷Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 28.

¹⁰⁸Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 627.

en route back to France when his ship sank in a storm and all perished.¹⁰⁹

Lefevre, Claude-Joseph — 120. There was a Louis Lefever, age 53 and a native of France, in Mobile at the 1850 census.¹¹⁰

Lefrançois, frères — 480

Legras — 240

Legrix, Bellisle — 240

Lemaignen, Pierre-Paul — 480

Lemeunier, Joseph — 160

Lerouyer, François — 160

Lesueur — 120

Lintroy — 120

Luciani, Pascal — 160

Lucien — 160

Macre, Jean — 120

Maillet, Henri — 160

Mahe — 40

Mal, Grouchy (or Grouchy, Mal?) — 480

Malozewsky, Constant Paul — 160 (a Polish name)

Mane — 160

Manfredi, Math. Ferd. — 160

Mangon and Martial — 40

Manoury, P.-Max. — 160

Mansuis, Luiller — 120

Marchaud, Louis — 480

Mariano, Pompée — 160

Martial (see Mangon). An infant of Mr. Martial died in Mobile County in 1839.¹¹¹

Martin, Amedée — 160

Martin, Francis — 480. Francis and Marius Martan were heads of household in the 1830 Marengo County census.¹¹² Marcus Martin 45M France and Mary Martin 75F France were in Greene

¹⁰⁹Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 109.

¹¹⁰*Baldwin County, Alabama, 1850 Census* (Microfilm), 192.

¹¹¹M&M, *Burial Records*, 50.

¹¹²England, *Source Book*, I, 70.

County in 1850.¹¹³ The same census shows D. Martin 45M France in Mobile¹¹⁴ and Benjamin Martin in Mobile County.¹¹⁵

Martin, Picquet, père — 120

Martin, Picquet, fils — 480

Martin, Prosper — 480

Martinet, Pierre-Louis — 240. A family of Santo Domingo refugees.¹¹⁶

Mathieu, Dr. Joseph — 480

Mayer — 40

Melizet, François — 480

Menou, Dieu-Donne — 120

Merle, Étienne — 160

Meslier, Bazile — 480. Bazil Messlier, age 70, native of France, died in Mobile County in 1849.¹¹⁷ There are several other Meslier entries in Mobile census and burial records, including Armidi Meslier, who married in 1847 at Tuscaloosa Marie Antoinette Marrast.¹¹⁸ How ironic that the son of a man who possibly participated in the execution of France's queen married her name-sake in Alabama!

Mesnier — 240

Mestayer, Michael — 480

Metais, Étienne — 240

Metais, Jean-Pierre — 120

Meynie, Jean-Ulysse — 120

Mignon — 40

Millon, Solidor — 160

Miot — 40

Moncravie, Jacques — 240

Mondin — 160

¹¹³*Greene County, Alabama, 1850 Census* (Microfilm), 653, 655.

¹¹⁴*Kilduff, Mobile Census*, 91.

¹¹⁵*Mobile County, Alabama, 1850 Census* (Microfilm), 886.

¹¹⁶Whitfield, "French Grants," 345.

¹¹⁷M&M, *Burial Records*, 136.

¹¹⁸F. S. Moseley, "Items on Persons Mentioned in 1850 Census, City of Mobile," in *Deep South Genealogical Quarterly*, VII (1969), 90.

Monot, Charles — 160
 Montalegri, Hiacinthe — 160
 Moquart — 160

Morel — 240. A. Moorel 49M France is in the 1850 Mobile census.¹¹⁹ James Morrell died in Mobile County in 1837, and Claude Morel in 1856.¹²⁰

Morin — 40
 Moucravie, Jacques — 160
 Moulin (see Fouquet)
 Moynier, Joseph — 160
 Murrat, Jean-Baptiste — 160
 Nardel, François — 160
 Nartigue, Justin — 240
 Neel, J. B. — 160
 Nidelet, E.-F. — 480
 Olivieri, Joseph — 160
 Onfray, Jean-Baptiste — 120
 Pagnière — 160
 Pagnière, J.-Alexandre — 160
 Pagaud, Pierre — 480
 Paguenaud, Edward — 240
 Papillot, Étienne — 160
 Parat, F.-Romain — 120
 Parat, R. — 40

Parmentier, Nicolas — 480. Parmentier was secretary of the association in Philadelphia, and seems the leader of the group to Alabama.¹²¹

Pascal, Paul — 160. Mrs. Rose Pascal, age 37, born in France, died in Mobile County in 1848.¹²²

Pastol, Julie, veuve (widow) — 320
 Payen, frères — 40

¹¹⁹Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 104.

¹²⁰M&M, *Burial Records*, 32, 233.

¹²¹Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 36ff.

¹²²M&M, *Burial Records*, 125.

Payen, frère — 40 (separate grants). An infant of Mr. Payen died in Mobile County in 1839.¹²³

Pelagot, Antoine — 160. Mr. Pecolot, a Frenchman, died in Mobile County in 1838.¹²⁴

Penard and Amedée — 40

Penazi, Louis — 160

Penière, fils, Emile — 240

Penière, père, J. — 480. Penière was a member of the Convention which voted the death of Louis XVI. After the Marengo colony failed, he removed to Florida, where he died.¹²⁵

Peraldi, Toussaint — 160

Perdreauville, René — 240

Petitval, J.-B. — 320

Pichon, Claude-Charles — 320

Pillero — 160

Plaudat, François — 160

Plantevigne — 160

Pochard, Auguste-François — 120

Poculo, Benoît — 320

Pothier, Simon — 240. From 1850 Mobile census: M. Portier 56M France and J. M. Portier 40M France. A child of Louis Potier died in Mobile County in 1845, and Reverend John Portier, age 42, native of France, died there in 1854.¹²⁶

Promis, Guillaume — 480

Prompt — 160

Prudhomme — 120. Mr. Prudhomey died in Mobile County in 1838, Mrs. Charles Prudhom in 1843.¹²⁷

¹²³*Ibid.*, 52.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 41.

¹²⁵Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 41; Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 627.

¹²⁶Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 115; M&M, *Burial Records*, 100, 209.

¹²⁷M&M, *Burial Records*, 41, 45.

Pueek — 40

Quépart — 60

Ragon (see Dupui)

Raoul, Colonel — 320. Colonel Nicholas Raoul shared Napoleon's exile to Elba as an aide, and led his return for the Hundred Days. He ran a ferry near Demopolis for a while, but was among the many who returned to France. With him in Alabama was his wife, the Marchioness of Sinavaldi.¹²⁸

Rapin — 40

Rapin, Joseph — 480

Ravesies, E. — 240

Ravesies, F.—480. Frédéric Ravesies, from Bordeaux, went to Santo Domingo during the French Revolution, where he operated extensive plantation holdings. His family became the victims of the slave uprising there. Frédéric escaped to America, and was given a grant in the Marengo colony. He was among the few still there in 1830, but removed to Mobile, where he died in 1854. The F. P. Ravesies 38M Pennsylvania in the 1850 Mobile census is probably his son.¹²⁹

Réal, Pierre-François — 480. Count Réal was the prefect of police under Napoleon.¹³⁰

Reudet, Corneille Cadet (Junior) — 120

Richard, Étienne — 480

Richard, Georges — 160

Rieger, Gabriel — 160

Rigaud, Colonel — 480. General Rigaud was another of Napoleon's high officers who went over to the Bourbons, only to desert them when Napoleon returned from Elba. He commanded the troops at Chalons during the Hundred Days. Rigaud led one of two expeditions from Philadelphia to Texas, and was second in

¹²⁸Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 628; Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 483.

¹²⁹Whitfield, "French Grants," 354; England, *Source Book*, I, 71; *Mobile County 1850 Census* (Microfilm), 888.

¹³⁰Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 29.

command at Champ d'Asile. He received a legacy of 100,000 francs from Napoleon's will, but he died in 1820 in New Orleans before the terms of the will became known.¹³¹

Riguad, Narcisse-Pericles — 160

Riguad, Pierre — 480

Rivet, Georges — 160

Rivière (see Germond). A sugarmaker named Augustus Rivier, age 22, native of France, is entered in the 1850 Mobile census.¹³²

Robaglia, Joseph — 160

Robin, Thomas — 240

Roland, Jean-François — 320. A Roland died in Mobile in 1837.¹³³

Roudel — 40. An Edward Roudet died in Mobile County in 1845.¹³⁴

Ruffier, Ferdinand — 160

Sagnier, Henri-Antoine — 160

St. David — 40

St. Félix, Jean — 120

St. Guiron, jeune (Junior) — 480

St. Guiron, P.-Pascal, *ainé* — 240. P. P. St. Guiron, age 62, died in Mobile County in 1849.¹³⁵

Salaignac, Louis — 120

Salmon, François — 120

Sary, Jean — 160

Savary, Joseph — 240. Joseph Savary (?) was a head of household in the 1830 Perry County census.¹³⁶

Savournin, Joseph — 240

Scasso, Vincent — 160

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 28, 80-91, 110.

¹³²M&M, *Burial Records*, 6.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 34.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 101.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 138.

¹³⁶England, *Source Book*, 145.

- Schoeun, Sebastian — 120
 Schubart (Schubert?), Henry — 240
 Schutz, Colonel Jean — 320
 Seveligne — 480
 Sibenthal, frères — 240
 Simon — 160. A. Simon, age 44, native of France, was in Mobile in 1830.¹³⁷
 Soula — 40
 Stallenwereck, frères — 480
 Stephens, Samuel J. — 160
 Stribaud, Charles — 160
 Taillade, Colonel — 320
 Tâche — 120
 Taverley (see Blancon)
 Terrier, R. A. — 240
 Teterel, François — 480
 Texier, Jean — 240
 Texier, Lepomeraye — 320
 Thouron, père et fils (father and son) — 480
 Torta, Jean — 160
 Tournel, Jacques — 160
 Transon, Jean — 240
 Truck — 160
 Tulane, freres (brothers) — 240
 Valcourt, Aimé — 160
 Vallot, Joseph — 160
 Vandame, Gl. — 480. General Vandame commanded the Third Corps during the Hundred Days.¹³⁹
 Vasques, Jean — 320
 Vaugine — 240
 Vernhes, Jean-Vincent — 120
 Verrier — 60
 Victoire, Delaunay (probably Delaunay, Victor) — 480

¹³⁷Kilduff, *Mobile Census*, 130.

¹³⁸Whitfield, "French Grants," 345.

¹³⁹Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 29.

Vial, Antoine — 120

Villemont — 240

Viole — 160. The marriage of Frances Violle in Marengo County indicates that this family took up its grant in Alabama.¹⁴⁰

Vitalba, Jean-Baptiste — 160

Villar, Charles — 480

Vogesland, Daniel — 120

Vorster, Colonel Émile — 320. This officer drowned in a storm at Galveston.¹⁴¹

Weill, James — 160. Franswat [sic] Wuill, native of France, died in Mobile County in 1836.¹⁴²

We can not know how many of the original grantees ever came to Alabama. Winston Smith identifies in his *Days of Exile* over eighty who did come: Baltar, Barthélemine, Batre, Beylle, Boutière, Brugiere, Butand [sic], Chapron, Chaudron, Clausel, Cluis, Condé, Coquillon, Cousin, Mme Davide [sic], Debrosse, Delaunay, Desmares, Desportes, Dirat, Dupui, Durive (Durière), Duval, Fallon (Fallot?), Follin, Fourestier, Fournier, Frederick, Gallard, George, Grillet, Victor Grouchy, Guilleault, Hurtel, Jeandreau, Lajonie, the brothers L'Allemand,¹⁴³ Laroderie, Laurent, Leboutellier, Lefèbvre-Desnouëttes, the brothers Lefrançois, Luciana, Mangon, Martin, Martinière, Melizet, Meslier, Mestayer, Mignon, Moquart, Morel, Murat [sic], Nidelet, Paguenaud, Parmentier, Penieres [sic], Plantevigne, Pochard, Poculo, Prudhomme, Raoul, Ravesies, Rivière, Roudet, St.-Guiron the younger, Savary, Simon, Soulas [sic], Stallenwereck brothers, Tasca [sic], Terrier, Texier, Thouron, Transon, and Violle [sic]. *Days of Exile* mentions additional French names which are not on the original grantee list, presumably later grantees or exchanges in the original list. A minimum estimate would be a hundred family units, with a probable total head-count of 350-400.

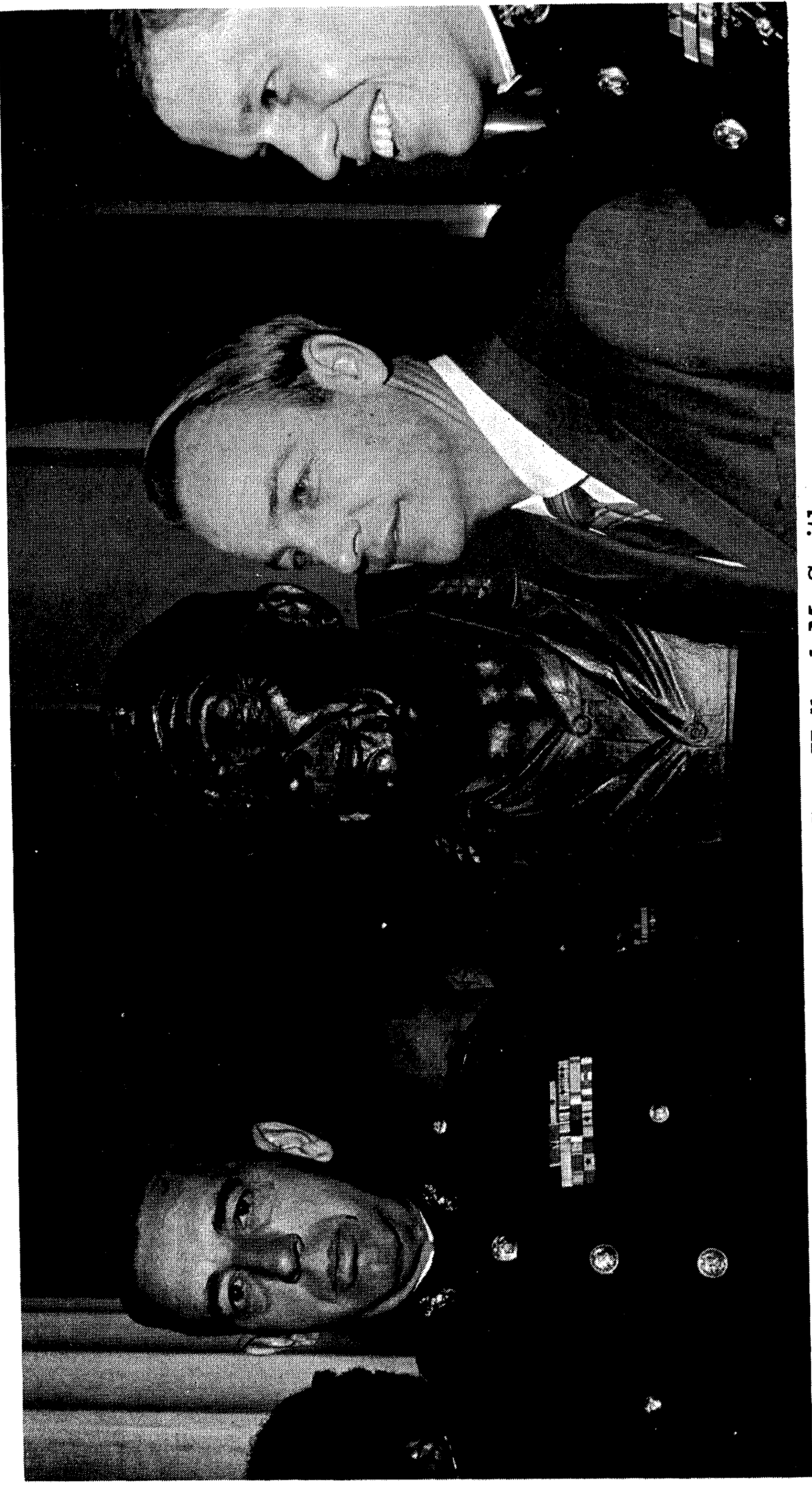
¹⁴⁰England, *Source Book*, 80.

¹⁴¹Reeves, "Napoleonic Exiles," 83.

¹⁴²M&M, *Burial Records*, 24.

¹⁴³"L'Allemand" is linguistically correct, but history uses the spelling "Lallemand." I have called attention to several other differences in spelling, without intent of correction. The several published lists of grantees vary somewhat in their spellings, which is inevitable in attempting to interpret foreign chirography.

The Marengo colony was foredoomed to failure. The soil and the climate were as unsuited to grape and olive culture as these imperial refugees were unsuited to pioneer life. Some recognized early the futility of their situation; others held stubbornly to their grants for a decade. Ultimately many returned to France, others settled in the Mobile area among people of their own race, a few intermarried with the encroaching American settlers to the Tombigbee basin, many died in the ill-favored region. All they left here was the memory of their courage. But for Napoleon's tardiness in embarking for America, they might have left here their Emperor, buried beside the Tombigbee.



Bust of Gen. Holland M. Smith

Left to right, Gen. Robert R. Fairburn, Gov. Albert P. Brewer, Lt. Thomas L. Krebs.

ADDRESS AT THE UNVEILING OF THE BUST OF GEN. HOLLAND M. SMITH*

by

Lt. Gen. Robert Fairbairn

Governor Brewer, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It was my privilege to be present at the dedication of the American Legion Hall of Honor. It is a distinct honor to be here today and have the opportunity to participate in this ceremony in honor of General Holland McTyeire Smith.

At the the outset, I should mention that General Smith is far more than a legendary name to me. He was my friend and mentor. In his memoirs, *Coral and Brass*, he concludes by saying, "Today I live in a little white house by the side of the road, strive to be a friend to my fellow man, and raise flowers, vegetables, and grandchildren."

*On January 8, 1970, the Holland M. Smith Memorial presented a bust of Gen. Smith to the Archives and History Department as a part of the Memorial's plan to commemorate the career of a great Marine hero of World War II. Gen. Smith was born in Hatchachubee, Alabama, April 20, 1882, graduated from Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1901, and received his law degree from the University of Alabama in 1903. In 1905 he entered the Marine Corps and began a forty-one-year career which earned him the sobriquet "Father of Amphibious Warfare." Ever considering himself an Alabamian, he left sizeable bequests to the law school at the University of Alabama and to Auburn University, formerly Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Additional funds are being raised by the Holland M. Smith Memorial for the scholarships set up in memory of Gen. Smith at the two universities.

The bust, placed in the lobby of the Alabama War Memorial Building which houses the Archives and History Department, was unveiled by Lt. Thomas L. Krebs, USMCR, a cousin of Gen. Smith. Lt. Gen. Fobert R. Fairburn made the dedicatory address. The bust was presented by Col. Conrad M. Fowler, chairman of the Holland M. Smith Memorial and accepted for the State of Alabama by Governor Albert P. Brewer. Col. John Rogers of the Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, Virginia, executed the bust, copies of which are being placed in the Auburn University Library and the library of the University of Alabama Law School.

It was during this period of his life that a combination of circumstances led to my good fortune in being able to call this distinguished American "friend".

And a distinguished American he was and an equally distinguished Marine officer.

His vision, his energy, his aggressive resourcefulness, his unswerving dedication to his country and the Marine Corps earned him this accolade.

Always a leader, ever an activist with the vision to look far into the future, the intelligence to innovate and design and the energy and spirit to fight for what he believed in, he gave himself to his task for 41 years.

In the period between World War I and World War II, which in many ways was a period of complacency, he rose above complacency and made major contributions to the Marine Corps, contributions which to a significant degree made possible the successful strategy used by the United States in World War II not only in the Pacific but also in the European theater.

Today, the Commandant of the Marine Corps is charged with five specific responsibilities. One of these five is "to develop, in coordination with other military services, the doctrines, tactics, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations." The case can easily be made that this responsibility is in fact the keystone of the whole structure of the Marine Corps.

General Smith's contribution to this now declared responsibility—this keystone of the corps is quite easily stated. He has been called and correctly so, "the father of amphibious warfare."

His vision of the requirement for and the techniques of amphibious warfare was acquired early in his career, but it was while a student at the Naval War College in 1920-1921 that he had the first opportunity to expose his thoughts on the subject. His concepts of amphibious warfare voiced at that time were re-

markably ahead of any existing thinking. As an example he recounts "I am no airman, but the widening scope and increasing effectiveness of air power made me realize the value of this weapon in the support of ground troops. I foresaw the day when the Marines would land according to a coordinated, carefully prepared plan of action, assisted by naval and air arms and assault strongly fortified positions with no possibility of failure, instead of going ashore in haphazard, extemporaneous swarm trusting to hit or miss methods." From this time in late 1920 his career was marked by his efforts to achieve this objective, an objective which was achieved during World War II and executed time and time again by Marines under his command when he was the Commanding General Fleet Marine Force Pacific.

In late 1921 he was as a Major assigned as the only Marine Corps officer to the joint Army-Navy Planning Committee. The junior officer on the committee, he was the first and only officer to so serve.

This assignment was most significant as it was the first time the Marine Corps had the opportunity to present its concepts of amphibious warfare at this high level. The fact that this vital assignment was given to a major speaks volumes for the confidence the Marine Corps had in his knowledge and ability.

In 1923 he personally sought and found a training area for the Marine Corps. He selected the island of Vieques and Culebra in the Caribbean, and made tenancy agreements. We are still there and still training in amphibious warfare.

In 1937 he became director of operations and training at Headquarters Marine Corps and as he states, "I was now in a position to supervise the building of a modern amphibious force along the lines we had developed for years and to obtain the necessary equipment to insure its success."

There is no question that he richly earned his title "Father of Amphibious Warfare." He was the architect and the builder. When world events developed as he had foreseen and the United

States was at war with Japan, he became the planner and commander. Thus completing the full cycle of vision, persuasion, planning, implementation, command and victory.

Advancing years took no toll on his clarity of thought or interest.

In a letter to me dated March 3, 1965, he wrote, "The morning paper indicates that a battalion of Marines is being sent to South Vietnam. The situation may develop into another Korea."

And on July 15, 1965—"The Vietnam situation is growing worse. In my opinion it will take 500,000 Marines and Army to arrive at a stalemate." And in the same letter "It is my opinion that without air power our troops would meet the fate of the French."

He wrote as he spoke—with clarity, with no equivocation and always to the point.

Beyond his genius as a military strategist and tactician, he was a warm, compassionate person who knew and loved people. Marines knew that instinctively.

In his retirement years, his mail was always heavy—often from Marines who had served in the Pacific who many times would simply address a letter to Howlin Mad Smith. He would always answer.

He also received many phone calls from former Marines who had served in World War II, but whom he did not personally know. He would always take their calls and give the caller full time and courtesy. At the conclusion of such a call he would more often than not smile and say, "That was one of my boys." He had thousands of them. For all, both officers and men, he had compassion and understanding. His reputation as "Howlin Mad" was warranted only when performance lagged capability, or when fighting for the dignity and recognition of his Marine Corps. He sorrowed for his men when they were hurt and rejoiced with them in their victories. And victories there were. Never

a failure—just as he had foreseen in 1920. During the war he continued to enhance the role of the Marine Corps in the command structure; he continued to improve techniques of amphibious warfare—now based on active combat experience. Many times this involved arguments with higher authority. As always, he spoke his mind and pursued his objectives of full recognition of the role of the Marine Corps, the reduction of casualties and rapid defeat of the enemy. He never swerved from his path.

He always was keenly aware of his Southern heritage and as you know often returned to his home state of Alabama. In his last letter to me in October, 1966, which I received in Vietnam, he wrote “I can remember when as a young lieutenant, I had to hike through the mud. Being a Southerner I took off my shoes and walked barefooted through the mud on the trail. I suspect such a procedure would not work in Vietnam.”

A Marine on active duty for 41 years and in retirement for another 20, he stands tall among all Marines. The word dedication can never be used more aptly. It was his life, his contribution to the Marine Corps is without parallel.

It is very appropriate that his deeds and his memory be perpetuated in this place in the state of his birth.

He would be perhaps a bit gruff about it—if you will permit one more personal reference, he wrote, “Someone unknown to me is paying for a bust of me to be unveiled at the Marine Corps birthday. It is a damn nuisance for I have to go to San Diego to the office of the sculptor (a lady). I must admit she is doing a pretty good job.”

I am sure he would agree you are doing a pretty good job.

He would particularly appreciate the efforts of Colonel Fowler and all the Marine Corps Reserve officers and those citizens of Alabama who are working to add to the bequests he made to Auburn University and the University of Alabama. His contributions to these two institutions and to the Marine Military Academy attest to his high interest in education, an inter-

est he expressed to the end as he was giving his personal support to the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas, when he was stricken at that place.

He used to say "Saint Peter will come for me soon and I am ready." He lived a full life, an exciting life; he made a full contribution. He was at peace with his God and with himself. He was ready.

BOOK REVIEWS

Nelson Manfred Drake. *Novelists' America: Fiction as History. 1910-1940.* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1969. Pp. 271 illustrated. \$6.95)

In an academic climate that is particularly receptive to interdisciplinary innovation, there remain many skeptics as to the value of attempting to view the factual world of history through the fictional world of literature. Yet that is precisely what Nelson Manfred Drake, professor of history at Syracuse University, has done in this book. He surveys the major American novels of the years 1910 to 1940 with an eye toward seeing what historical truths about twentieth-century America are revealed in fictional characters and settings and plots and themes.

In fact, Professor Blake maintains that "If history is to be relevant to the world we live in, we cannot afford to be content with conventional documents as historical source materials. We need to ask whether useful materials for understanding the past may not be found in works of fiction." Blake's answer to his own question is a resounding "Yes", as he examines in the subsequent chapter the novels of Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, John Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, and Richard Wright.

Professor Blake finds that most of these novelists lament the corrupting influence of materialism in America life. Lewis, for example, observes the degeneration of idyllic small towns into greedy cities. Fitzgerald especially focuses his vision on the "arrogance of the established rich" and the "vulgar ostentation of the newly rich." And Faulkner's fictional South lies moribund, largely because of the rise of Snopesism—"the new clans of shifty and avaricious riffraff." These findings are all sound, it seems to me; the unfortunate truth about them, however, is that they are already so very well known.

In the final analysis this book fails to add anything to our knowledge of American history or of American literature. Yet, perhaps Professor Blake deserves praise for tackling so difficult a problem—one that historians and English teachers usually

shun. There can be little doubt that some relationships between history and fiction exists; the case for drawing specific conclusions about either one from the study of the other remains unproved.

Winston Smith
University of Alabama

Ralph A. Wooster, *The People in Power: Courthouse and Statehouse in the Lower South, 1850-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969. Pp. xi, 189. \$6.25.)

Using statistics derived from the manuscript census returns, the late Professor Frank L. Owsley and his students were proceeding in the 1940's toward a new synthesis of Southern history when their progress in that direction was halted by a famous article, "Economic Democracy in the Slave South: An Appraisal of Some Recent Views," by Fabian Linden. Seldom has a critique been more devastating. Professor Owsley's results were shown to be shot through with fallacies and his methods were made to appear naive. But the completeness of Linden's victory had a most unhappy result. Owsley's non-statistical arguments were forgotten. Historians complacently returned to an acceptance of the abolitionist stereotypes about ante-bellum society and politics. Even more unfortunate was the general abandonment of the manuscript census returns, that vast data bank which Owsley had discovered, as a source for the study of the period.

Such a result was very far from what Linden had desired. He had freely acknowledged that Owsley's "extensive and systematic utilization of the census manuscripts" had made "a contribution of considerable promise to the field of southern historiography," and he urged historians "to exploit the full historical potential" of the records by approaching them "with sharpened statistical tools and with scientifically objective postulates." It has now been almost a quarter of a century since the publication of Linden's article, and at last some small beginnings are being made by a few enterprising historians toward taking up Linden's challenge. Such a first step is Professor Ralph A. Wooster's recently published *The People in Power: Courthouse and Statehouse in the Lower South, 1850-1860*.

Professor Wooster has undertaken to determine the economic status of a wide variety of politicians—governors, judges, legislators, and county commissioners—in seven lower South states in the years 1850 and 1860. He has scoured the census returns and presents us with many interesting tables showing the age, nativity, real and personal property holdings, slave holdings and occupations of the region's ante-bellum rulers. On the whole he finds them to have been men of moderate means, except in the state of South Carolina, where office holders were a relatively wealthy group. He notes a tendency for politicians in 1860 to possess somewhat more substantial resources than did their colleagues of a decade earlier. And he finds that positions on the county or district level were more likely to be filled by the less well-to-do than were statewide offices.

Most of the rest of Professor Wooster's book is a mere statement of the developing powers and functions of the various offices. This information is generally derived from standard secondary sources, and could easily have been dispensed with. The book is not improved by its inclusion.

Wooster's tables are informative, of course, but he has fallen into a practice which will, I fear, rapidly condemn this book to oblivion. The rise of statistical history in recent years has led to the adoption by some of its devotees of a pseudo-scientific notion that figures can and should speak for themselves. These historians seem to believe that by presenting their summary data with a minimum of interpretive comment, they achieve a level of objectivity to which other students can only pretend. Perhaps some of them, in the face of Owsley's earlier blunders, realize their own lack of mathematical expertise, and are rendered gunshy. No doubt others are genuinely hypnotized by the false sense of certainty which the use of numbers engenders in many people. But in either case, the result is historically unsatisfying.

The fact is that statistics are evidence, just as are letters, speeches and editorials. They cannot stand alone. When properly used, they are introduced judiciously to facilitate the reader's understanding of an argument derived from a careful survey of all the available sources—literary as well as numerical. In such a position, statistics may be—indeed, they often are—invalu-

able tools for understanding events or for testing hypotheses. But banks of tables alone mean very little except that their compiler does not know what to do with them. In the present book, for instance, we are left wondering if the property levels of Southern politicians are significant. Did these men vote class interests? Are the states of their nativity significant in predicting their attitudes? Were the elderly inclined to be more nationistic? Did large slaveholders act as a bloc? Was there a rural-urban conflict? In short, are these data significant in understanding the course of Southern history, or are they merely trivia to delight the sedentary antiquarian? We are even left to wonder about the accuracy of the picture which the figures paint. Professor Wooster makes the assumption that anyone whose name he did not find in the slave schedules was a non-slaveholder. In fact, however, census-takers often overlooked residents. Failure to recognize this obvious fact leads Wooster to understate his mean slave-holding results.

The source of a historian's problems may be an imagination too vivid—one which sees patterns where none exist and weaves unwilling data into its scheme. But a pattern which is erroneous is at least an attempt to solve the riddles of our past, and it may stimulate someone else to develop a pattern which is correct. A book full of figures, on the other hand, is insignificant. Thousands of figures could be developed for the antebellum South—the number of board feet in its timber stands, for instance, or the death rate from yellow fever. Only the imagination of the historian, however, can relate statistics to the destiny of the region, can leap from the certainty of figures to the unknown explanation. The failure to seek such a leap is the abdication of the title "historian." Frank Owsley's data were wrong, but his name is still remembered. Far too many of the practitioners of the new statistical history have failed to profit from observing this fact.

J. Mills Thornton, III

Yale University